Jill's Rhodesian Philosophy

Gertrude Page

JILL'S
RHODESIAN
PHILOSOPHY

Photo by Arthur Rouselle, 61 Knightsbridge, S.W.

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OR

THE DAM FARM

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TO

THE RHODESIANS

WHO HAVE DIED,

MAKING THE PATHS FOR THOSE WHO

COME AFTER

Jill's Rhodesian Philosophy
or, The Dam Farm

I

LONDON,
April 2.

MY DEAR JACK,

You seem to have been somewhat perturbed when you last wrote to me—in fact, your geography was all just anyhow. Rhodesia is not in the middle of the Desert of Sahara; neither is it on the shore of the Dead Sea; neither, as far as I can ascertain, do they still eat missionaries there. It would serve you right if I punished your crass ignorance by entering into such details as the exact longitude and latitude, its altitude and the precise nature of its soil; but, as I am frantically busy buying clothes to suit its climate, I will confine myself

to answering your string of (belovéd brother-kin, I say it with all respect) somewhat asinine questions.

Why are we going to Rhodesia? . . . Why are we going to farm? . . . Why are we going to chuck England? . . . Have we both suddenly taken leave of our senses? . . .

Well, I think one reason why we are going is because my cook-parlourmaid-housemaid has developed a cook-parlourmaid-housemaid's knee, and, as I cannot find any one else to take her place, it seemed a good idea to go out to one of the Colonies. Another reason is the happy circumstance that a dear old uncle of Chip's (we love him better now he is dead) has just left him £2,000, and we are both quite sure the Right Honourable Lloyd George will manage to get most of it, if we don't what is vulgarly called "make tracks" as soon as possible, and get the other side of an ocean.

I think the chief reason why we chose Rhodesia is because I fell in love with the name. I must tell you it was no hurried, shallow choice. We did our choosing very thoroughly. That is to say, we bought an

atlas and looked carefully at each map in turn, conscientiously observing the mountain ranges and river courses and all those sort of things. Chip, I must admit, had rather a fancy for New Zealand—I think he liked the shape of it; but when I saw the word "Rhodesia" written across a lovely shade of pink, I said, "That is the place for Jill." I don't know if they have atlases in Quetta, but if you are within riding distance of one, just take a glance at the effect of a charming word like Rhodesia written across a delicate shade of pink, and you will at once understand my choice. Chip was very sweet about it. As I pointed out to him, anything *new* is more or less an abomination, and New Zealand had an objectionably modern, money-grubbing sound about it; whereas Rhodesia conveyed the very atmosphere of romance and mystery, which is further shown by the fact that we were both elated to observe it was in South Africa, somewhere near Nyassaland, Bechuanaland, and the Congo—all names equally fraught, to us, with mysterious whereabouts, climes, and happenings.

We next proceeded to procure a booklet

called "Southern Rhodesia," published by the British South Africa Company; and after that I could but start to pack up. It was absolutely the only thing to do. Why, here was an Eldorado! a Millennium! a Garden of Eden! I could not pack fast enough. I felt as if I wanted to set off and run all the way to Southampton. When I stopped to rest a moment and consider, I looked across the street, and wondered why the people at No. 33 were not going too. Why be just No. 33, when a country of mystery and charm, an Arabian Nights Fairyland (see "Southern Rhodesia") is beckoning—beckoning? It must be lack of enterprise; nothing else will explain. There is that land over there, with its fruits and flowers and sunshine and richness, calling, and yet people stay in a street like this, to be sneered at by Winston Churchill, and squeezed dry by Lloyd George, and cope with cook-parlourmaid-housemaid's knees.

"Why are we going to farm?" Well, we must do something, and Chip says he knows quite a lot about potatoes, and beans, and pigs.

It sounds rather plebeian, and I have to take his word for it; but he has always been very keen on growing mustard and cress in boxes in the back yard, which is a good sign.

According to the booklet, farming is not at all a scientific process in Rhodesia: you can grow lots of things by chiefly looking at niggers. They do all the work, and the farmer rides about on a nice horse with a gun, and makes his fortune. I must admit that part sounds a little too good to be true, and one must no doubt subtract something for the commercial side of the Company, but there seems to be more than enough to make up for a few unchronicled drawbacks.

"Have we both taken leave of our senses?" Certainly not. On the contrary, we feel as if we have just been fitted with brand-new "refills." Don't you perceive that in this new life we are going to be grand, and vigorous, and free, real people doing real things, instead of worried, and fettered, and artificial, straining to make both ends meet in spite of the Budget?

I suppose you must come home and see the Motherkin your next leave; but the one after

you might spend in Rhodesia; and then I expect you will chuck the Army and come and grow things with the rest of us.

I'm so glad you like the General's wife, and she is so nice to you. Be discreet, O brotherkin! The fact that you have observed the colour of her eyes fills my sisterly breast with apprehension. Did you also unburden your soul to her about what you are pleased to call our "unaccountable, incomprehensible madness"?

I must really go on packing now.

Yours,

JILL.

P.S.—I wish you could see Chip dressed for the part. Riding-breeches, gaiters, an enormous pith helmet, and three or four deadly weapons. I don't know what he is going to shoot, and I'm secretly rather afraid of them, but they seem to suit the part all right; and between you and me I'm glad farming in Rhodesia doesn't mean just spades and hoes and things.

Or, The Dam Farm

Cape Town to Rhodesia *en route*

My dear Jack,

It must have taken you a long time to think out all the long words in your last letter of remonstrance, which caught us up at Cape Town. Lucky you had a dictionary near. My highest flight of imagination cannot credit you with those three-syllable words, spelt correctly, unaided. Rather disastrous it should be all wasted. When it reached England the Motherkin was sobbing over two vacant chairs (or else the awful litter I left behind). Chip was cursing his fate on his back in his little bunk, with a pea-green face, and wishing no one had ever found Rhodesia; while I made friends with a good-looking soldier on deck.

A voyage is a unique experience. You seem to see people the first two or three days whom you never see again; and about the middle of the journey you constantly discover some

one you have never seen before. I do not propose to explain. It belongs to the mysteries of the sea. To a casual observer it is as though the ship carried a cargo of passengers who were allowed on deck in relays, the first selection being mostly those of a pea-green tint.

The Union-Castle ships are beautifully fitted up, and wonderfully steady. Often it is difficult to realise you are on the sea at all. It is, in fact, not so much impressed upon you by the motion as by the extraordinary things one finds oneself doing. I ask you, could I, anywhere but on a ship, drive a full-grown man, with a handkerchief over his eyes, in and out between rows of empty bottles as if he were a horse? Or could I grow positively enthusiastic over an occupation known as "chalking the pig's eye"? I did not excel at these achievements, but I unblushingly assert that I enjoyed them—and you must surmise what you will. I will confess to the uttermost. There was one race which consisted of a lady running down the deck to where her partner had drawn an animal in chalk on

the boards. She had to guess the name of the animal, write it on a piece of paper, and run back. I wrote my animal down a kangaroo . . . and it was a guinea-fowl.

Then there was a Bridge tournament. That was quite good. I had a partner who was vexed with me for getting five tricks in "No trumps," because he thought I ought to have declared "Hearts." Afterwards—by way of a peace-offering I think—he asked me if I would take a little "liquid"? Our opponent's lady-partner went "No trumps," and lost every trick. When asked, nervously, to explain her declaration, she exclaimed, "Well, I hadn't a trick in my hand. What else could I go!" There was a little coldness, as usual, between husbands and wives playing together—but then why, in Heaven's name, play thus? My own experience is, that just as a husband expects a wife to make a shilling go where he fails with half a crown, so he expects her to know more about their opponents' cards than she really ought.

There was, of course, the usual pair of lovers—but for speed this pair beat anything

I ever heard of. The mode of procedure is always the same, I understand. Two days' acquaintanceship, followed by a period of gay companionship, followed by another period in which the man curses his luck at having to play Bridge, and the girl wanders away alone and gazes at the sea. This lasts until the psychological moment, and after that "sheepish" is hardly the word for it. But not often, I think, so dreadful a disaster overtakes the poor young things as that which overtook our love-birds. At the sports' prize-giving they were solemnly and ceremoniously presented with a large picture of the ship, signed by every one on board. "Trying" they certainly were, and painfully lacking in restraint; but I really do not think they had deserved that.

I do not know what time the ship reaches Cape Town, but you find it there when you wake up. Seen from the sea, if you can look past the docks without seeing them, it is an enchanting place; though perhaps its charm is chiefly centred in its mountain. Anyhow it is Africa, and however prosaic and commonplace one's immediate vicinity, an ardent ima-

gination easily peoples the spaces behind the mountain with lions and elephants, with pigmies and bushmen, with the sands of the desert and the wealth of the tropics. That is one way in which it differs from Dover. Look beyond Dover from an arriving steamer, and what your imagination probably paints first is the new hat you mean to get the moment you arrive, the tailor instructed to be in readiness for you, or the dinner you hope to eat at the Savoy.

And that is further why it is good to go to Africa. You feel it the moment you gaze at Table Mountain. You know instinctively that in England you will, through habit, do what you are told, and be what you are told by that stern censor Public Opinion ; but once get well past Table Mountain, and if you have anything in you that is original it will show itself, and thrive. You feel in your blood it is quite impossible for any one to say what you will be or what you will do, once you are out there in the big spaces with all your fancy running free.

A commonplace, everyday train rushes you

out to meet the unknown, but you easily forget that. You can even pretend it is an aeroplane—for the wonderful atmosphere which seems to illumine one's very sight by its extraordinary clearness, will illumine your mind also, if you make yourself in tune with your surroundings, and send your imagination in wild flights whither you will.

Outside Cape Town there is a carpet of flowers, stretching in vast reaches, and studded with alluring blue kopjes that cast shadows of mystery and dream over the flower-strewn veldt.

I have never seen anything anywhere like the African kopjes. They are wild, delicious, untamed things, that sprang up whither they listed, without any concern for each other or any one else. If two or three forgather, it is mere chance. Quite as often they choose to stand alone—haughty, indifferent, remote. Imagine a young mountain calmly planting itself down in the middle of Salisbury Plain—for no apparent reason whatever—and you have a South African kopje. If it has a flat top, as though sliced clean off by a sharp

knife, you can safely conclude it is a Cape Colony kopje; if it is covered with rather stubbly trees, you may guess it is a Rhodesian one; and if it has a verdant air you can compliment it on the beauty of Natal.

The railway never seems to get near enough to a Transvaal kopje for a passenger to describe it—but beyond a certain local trait it is sure to be the same generally, and often to have a predilection for its own company. Some of the most striking specimens of kopjes are to be seen at De Aar Junction, a spot where one cannot choose but think sadly of khaki-clad Britishers who swarmed out over the far-reaching plains—how many, alas! how many, to come back no more! Indeed, one thinks of them all along the route; reminded poignantly by block-houses, and defence works, and lonely graves.

You are a soldier, Jack—and I love you for it—but our differences with South Africa should never have needed the help of your profession, never have been driven home to each new-comer by the sight of war's deadly tracks, and those silent, lonely graves, where

white people, living together in one country, killed each other.

After the Hex Mountains the scenery grows very flat and monotonous, except for the charm of the far spaces. Always there is distance, and wonderful clearness, and radiant sunshine.

We reached Mafeking in the early morning and walked along the historic streets, picturing to ourselves the bursting of shells and cleaving of shot. They must have been stirring times for so insignificant a little corner of the world, but it seems to have gone peacefully to sleep again now, wrapped round by a colourless, sand-swept plain.

Buluwayo is also reached in the early morning, and one drives to the Grand Hotel for breakfast, and views with no small surprise the imposing array of buildings. Then follows the last stage of the journey. At midday the mail train steams on again, and one plunges into the heart of Rhodesia. And a lovely heart it is. Vistas of park-like land, with hills and valleys and forests, and more far-away spaces, dreaming quiet afternoon dreams

in the glow of the setting sun. Every now and then the train comes to a standstill, and perhaps there is a little corrugated iron shanty, and a few coatless men, and a dilapidated Cape cart drawn by dilapidated-looking mules, and a name on a board one is afraid to try and pronounce—and that is a station.

There seldom seemed to be any reason for the station, besides the coatless men and the dilapidated mule-cart; so perhaps they are merely placed at intervals as a sort of bait for possible colonists to come and settle near them some day.

Hailsbury, our own particular destination, was reached soon after daybreak this morning, and I am merely scrawling a sort of finish because my letter must be posted at once to catch the mail.

I can't tell you what it is like because I have not seen anything much at present but red sand, and one solitary, somewhat arrogant-looking kopje, frowning down on the curious medley of buildings, which seem to have sprung up just where they liked with a blissful indifference to any sort of plan. But perhaps

my impressions so far have been prejudiced by the temperature. Certainly it is not easy to see anything through rose-coloured glasses, when you arrive out specially prepared to battle nobly with oppressive heat, and find yourself combating several degrees of frost. To shiver with cold, and have a red nose, and long for a fur coat in the tropics is not playing fair on some one's part; and it is quite impossible not to feel a little resentful—especially when you arrive at the best hotel, and find a dismal, half-awake sort of inn, that receives you grudgingly as an intruder. However, by ten o'clock it is nearing eighty degrees in the shade; so perhaps on mail days it is what Americans would call "just samples," and I shall learn quickly how best to cope with them.

If you find this letter somewhat disjointed, it is accounted for by the fact that it has been written in stages en route. My best thanks for all your wise and carefully worded remonstrances, urging us to give up our mad scheme and remain in England.

I quite recognise that you mean well; but

having invested in a farm, and spent a small fortune getting ourselves here, we think it better to remain for the present. It does not follow the letter is wasted. I might return it to you to keep until our next mad scheme. This is quite likely to be a little trek up to Cairo ; only mind you post it in time, and do not let it follow us by the next mail, and catch us up resting peacefully at our journey's end.

Chip has not passed an opinion on Rhodesia yet, but he has occasionally worn a slightly pathetic air, and I believe he is a little disappointed not to have seen more of the advertised " milk and honey " about, and not once to have descried anything to shoot at beyond a cow or a goat.

Good-bye. Sorry you were too intent upon our plans to mention the General's wife in your last—or are you studying eyes of another colour now ?

Yours,

JILL.

WOODLANDS,
May.

MY DEAR JACK,

I knew mail day would surprise me with a letter unwritten to you, so I kept a diary each day. I enclose it herewith. Next time I will write a letter à la mode—unless the "milk and honey" has been too much for me—which you will gather from the diary is not very probable.

Yours,
JILL.

Diary of First Week.

Saturday, May 10.—Left town in a mule wagon, drawn by six mules, in harness so much the worse for wear it looked as if it might fall to pieces any moment, driven by a native of a particularly *odorous* type, while a second, smaller one, ran alongside the mules, the better to induce them to trot. Only an apology for a road much of the way, so the wagon rocked and tumbled about like a miniature earthquake, and we were unceremoniously pitched this way and that amongst the luggage. Was too busy keeping an eye on the sharp-cornered articles to notice anything much about the scenery, except that it was flat. At intervals nothing visible but the sky, and one side of the wagon looming above. Was also considerably inconvenienced by the odour of my "black brother" —a circumstance not conducive to poetical musing on any sort of scenery.

A mile and a half from the farm the wagon broke down—to be exact, a tyre came off one of the wheels—so we had to walk the rest of the way, driving the six mules before us, and carrying such of our belongings as we felt desirable for the night—the remainder being destined to pass the hours of darkness alone with the wagon on the veldt. Just at first felt rather relieved at prospect of walking. Sharp-cornered articles no longer an inconvenience; and odorous nigger no longer to windward. Soon found it was merely a choice of evils. Getting dark quickly, and started by falling over a hidden stump. Chip thought it was funny, so I laughed too, but wished he had my knee.

Boy took us a short cut along a narrow path, through grass over our heads. Very dark. Thought about lions and tigers. Was suddenly confronted by big dark object, and screamed. Felt sure it was an elephant, but it turned out to be only a stray mule. Chip thought this funny too. I didn't. My nerves were a little on edge, and I hurried. Was stopped dead, with uncomfortable sudden-

ness, by wire fence. Thought there were no such things in Rhodesia. Chip grazed his hand, so was not quite so amused as previously.

Finally arrived at our destination, mixed up with mules and niggers. Chip's pal was waiting to receive us. By the way, did I ever tell you Chip had discovered an old pal was on the next farm, and that he had made all arrangements for us ? Could not see anything but his outline in the dark. Rather liked his outline—also his voice—it sounded as if he had a twinkle. He has. Seemed rather amused at my arriving on foot, mixed up with the mules.

A lot of niggers in a crowd also seemed amused. Could see rows of gleaming teeth. Rather wished they were not black. Horribly uncanny in the firelight.

The Pal piloted us up a hill like a house side to our dwelling—a little brick bungalow with corrugated iron roof—taken over from the last tenant just as it stood, except that The Pal had had a little cleaning done, and had installed a new cook-boy and a new house-boy.

He had also ordered a meal. It consisted of bully beef, potatoes, bread and treacle. Potatoes handed round in tin basin by a nigger—like the one who drove, only more so. The floor made of bricks, very uneven, chairs correspondingly unsteady; cannoned unexpectedly into the "more so" nigger and the tin basin of potatoes. He looked frightened, but was not nearly so upset as I. (Joke unintentional.)

The Pal said he had a friend taking care of his farm, and would stay the first week to help us settle. He will sleep in a hut outside, without a door. I wouldn't do it for worlds—which seemed to amuse him. Went to bed tired out, which was just as well, as no pillows nor bolster; and sheets, towels, etc., making a night of it, out on the veldt.

Sunday.—Was awakened very early by the cook-boy marching into the room with tea. Don't like the appearance of him at all. He wears a murderous-looking knife in his belt, and a funny little red flower stuck through

his ear. Don't think he quite likes the look of me. At present we glower at each other, and I wonder anxiously if either Chip or I will ever dare to tell him we don't want him. Still, I do not suppose he'll suffer from cook-parlourmaid-housemaid's knee. His garments leave a good deal to be desired, as well as his face. He wears a very dirty shirt, with a rent all down the back showing his black skin, and a very tight pair of electric-blue knickerbockers with a big brown patch on the seat.

The Pal says he is a good cook-boy, and I suppose he knows; but he seems to have a great fancy for sitting on a box in front of the kitchen fire doing nothing. Each time I have ventured in I have found him thus; but he just glowers at me, and I fly precipitately.

The house-boy is a meek, foolish individual, who grins whenever you speak to him, and says "Ye . . . es, Missis." He is, however, a person of ideas. For breakfast he placed on the table, among other things, whisky, pickles, and cheese.

For the rest, our breakfast had a very

"tinny" flavour—tinned milk, tinned butter, tinned jam, tinned fish, tin cups and saucers, and tin plates.

Was pleased to find The Pal's twinkle a certainty by daylight. When I stood on the verandah after breakfast, surveying the landscape, he came up to me quite casually and said: "Look here, let me give you a little sound advice. Empty your head as quickly as possible of all you expected to find, and begin afresh, stocking it with the real thing. You'll hate it all like hell for a little while—then you'll begin to like it—then you'll ask for nothing better. You can take my word for it, it's worth while sticking to your guns. It's a good country—if the gold doesn't lie about in heaps as some of them seem to imply at home; but it's first of all a country that likes grit. You stick to it through thick and thin, and you'll find in the end the country will do as much for you."

He was filling an antiquated pipe with Rhodesian tobacco from the dirtiest little cotton tobacco bag conceivable, with a blissfully serene air, and for a moment I turned my gaze from

the view to contemplate him. He wore an old felt hat stuck on the back of his head, a khaki shirt open nearly to his waist, a pair of khaki shorts ripped off above the knee by a penknife, leaving frayed edges—then a bare space—then puttees and thick hobnailed boots. His sleeves were rolled up well above the elbow, and the hands that calmly filled the antiquated pipe from the little dirty calico bag matched both. I liked looking at him. Somehow or other the prospect from the verandah frightened me a little. He invigorated me. To wear garments like that, and still to look the high-bred gentleman he emphatically was, contained an element of romance that made other things seem worth while.

"Do you speak from experience?" I asked.

"Rather. Look here, when I first came out I was twenty-nine, and I'd never done a real day's work in my life. I suffered from chronic dyspepsia, and I was always trying some filthy medicine or other for it. I was afraid to look an honest meal in the face, and I belonged to the Weary Willy tribe. Well, I walked over a thousand miles in the first six

months; I picked up a habit of working from sunrise to sunset; and I eventually developed the sort of appetite that enjoys any blooming thing that is eatable. That's what Rhodesia has done for me, and I'm grateful to it."

I asked him if he was going to give Chip the same advice he had given me, and he said it wasn't necessary. He said, "Let him once get fond of Rhodesian tobacco, and put in a few good 'shoots,' and he'll be all right for five years at least."

I gathered that the burden was to fall on me—what burden there was—and I again surveyed the landscape thoughtfully.

Our dwelling-place—one can hardly call it a house, though it is built of brick, and has glass windows, which I am assured is by no means a foregone conclusion out here—stands very high, and we have a fine view across a large valley of cultivated land to a range of kopjes opposite. I can't say I think it pretty. It isn't. In May everything is dried up. A good plan is to take in a big lump of sky for distance, and one's bit of garden

close at hand. Our bit of garden is a mass of blue convolvuli. It is a Japanese specimen, called Morning Glory, and is a large bloom of exquisite pastel colouring. This is all over everything—in festoons, and garlands, and bushes. It makes a veritable transformation scene. Then there are lovely roses climbing up the verandah posts, and a gorgeous Bougainvillea makes a splash of rich crimson at one corner. Besides these, there are some fine bananas, that make a delicious rippling, swaying sound in the breeze. Behind the house there are tall gum trees, and below the kopje, on the left, a fruit orchard and orangery.

As for the house, as far as I can discover, it does not possess a cupboard from end to end, nor a larder, nor any sort of scullery nor pantry. Things like glasses and cups and knives and forks live quite openly in the dining-room; the food reposes wherever it can find a rest for the sole of its foot, and all washing up is done on the ground outside, in about a pint of water.

For luncheon we again had bully beef and

potatoes, and bread and treacle, with a huge teapot of tea.

In the afternoon I did some unpacking, and I must confess I felt a little pathetic over my new clothes.

The man whom we consulted at home about our coming life, told us Hailsbury was a very gay place, and I should often ride to town. I have not yet seen anything rideable but a donkey, and The Pal says it is no use buying a horse at present, as horse sickness is so prevalent just now. Chip had a few pathetic moments also. He strolled in with his gun, and a certain wistful expression he keeps for the moments when he wants my sympathy, and sat down on my favourite blouse. It did not seem to matter, so I merely asked, with slightly forced jocularity, "Sport any good?"

"We've tramped miles," he murmured, "and not seen anything to shoot but a blooming butterfly."

Monday.—I ventured into the kitchen early, with a notion of cooking something by way

of varying the bully beef and bread and treacle. Felt a good deal awed by Shilling's hostile glance and huge clasp-knife, but assumed a nonchalant air and looked into a tin. It contained pearl barley, all crawling with insects. Shut it up again and shuddered. Asked Shilling if there was anything to make a cake or pudding of. He shook his head and glared defiantly, from which I gathered that he did not understand English, and I might as well address the dog. Felt afraid to open another tin, and appalled by the dirt generally, so retired to the verandah to consider. Decided to let it be bully beef, etc., once more, and go for a stroll. Discovered one gang of boys reaping mealies (Indian corn), and another shelling them with a most ingenious machine. They all stopped working to gaze at me, and chatted freely among themselves, apparently on my aspect generally.

The first thing that struck me was, "what a pity to let them wear clothes!" Here were a dozen or two fine, strapping natives, absolutely disfigured by filthy old cast-off garments worn anyhow. I wondered if Chip

would let me plan a little bathing-suit costume for our own working natives, and decided to ask him.

I wandered on a little farther, and found Chip and The Pal going into ecstasies over the working of a new disc plough. They captured me at once, and proceeded to harangue me on the way it turned up what they called virgin soil. I tried to look interested, but only succeeded in looking mildly intelligent, and at the first opportunity left them to go on turning over virgin soil to their hearts' content. But you will perceive Chip is taking to it like a duck to water. It is not too much to say he looked at that plough as if he loved it, and The Pal did likewise. They scarcely noticed when I strolled away.

I went in search of further wonders, and presently discovered Tambo, the foolish house-boy, washing my lawn lingerie, with its hand-made lace, in a stream by thumping it upon an old wooden box. Afterwards he spiked it on bushes. I was so struck by the spectacle that I sat down all of a heap: as I could not speak a word of his language, nor he a word

of mine, it seemed the only available protest. The sun disturbed my astonished cogitations by becoming unbearably hot, so I toiled a little sadly back to the verandah and ordered coffee.

In the afternoon Chip tried another shoot, while The Pal went over to his own farm for an hour or two. About tea-time Chip returned, smothered in grass seeds from head to foot, and with one small dove for his bag. "If there had only been two!" I murmured. "There was a tree full of them, and they were all sitting, and I fired point-blank at the lot," he said savagely. "I think that one probably died of amusement. They don't mind shot out here. What is more, you might as well go shooting down the Thames Embankment by Whitehall as on this farm without good dogs."

We had bully beef twice to-day, but made hot in the evening, when it tastes like boiled red string flavoured with Kaffir. After dinner we all sat and scratched . . . the mosquitoes were having a field day, and arriving in battalions.

Tuesday.—The Pal took me for a walk on the farm this morning, while Chip looked after the boys. He showed me the forage, which is oats; the lucerne, which is alfalfa; some potatoes, some ground nuts, and some beans. We finished up at the compound and farm yard, where there are fowls, and turkeys, and pigs, and things of that sort. He was immensely taken with some little pink-and-white pigs scampering about, and tried to catch one for me to hold. I watched with silent thankfulness while it evaded his utmost efforts, until it dashed between my feet, under my short skirt, and then I screamed aloud.

Somehow or other, viewed from a London drawing-room, farming in Rhodesia does not seem to mean farm yards and pigs and wheelbarrows and those sort of things.

We did not have bully beef to-day, as somebody farming near, who has a wife who is at home in England, and who is called the Gentleman Farmer, sent us over a nice piece of buck. We finished off with our old friends bread and treacle, however, and tea flavoured with nigger.

We also had some soup. As a matter of fact we always have soup for dinner, whether there is anything to make it of or not. I am afraid to ask how it is done, from dread of what I might learn. You see, there is so little else to eat; but from what I have seen of the natives' habits, I am horribly afraid, that as a last resource, they just boil the dirty kitchen cloths, and flavour the result with Worcester Sauce. I have already discovered that in Rhodesia sauce is a far more important thing than soap. In fact, it is quite indispensable—which soap is not—either to drown the taste of some things, or suggest one in others.

Wednesday.—Managed to make some pastry this morning. Used a bottle for a rolling-pin, and rolled the pastry out on the bottom of a tin dish turned upside down—the whole being achieved on the dining-room table. By the way, there is no kitchen table at all, beyond a dirty old box turned upside down; but furniture is quite a superfluous quantity out here—like the soap.

I also put some yeast in the sun to rise: Shilling's bread being distantly related to cannon-balls, and more useful to throw at the live stock, which delight to investigate our little bit of garden, than anything.

There have been rumours of a possible native rising over the increased hut tax, so I kept my Colt's Dersinger loaded, and within easy reach. Once during the day I saw black specks creeping up the valley towards the house, so I rushed for the telescope—and when, after a long and agonising period, I managed to locate them, they turned out to be sheep.

I have discovered that the black boys call Chip "Inkaas," and it means "lord and master." Fancy Chip being addressed as "lord and master!"—he seems to rather like it. If, in future, I allude to him as H.H., you will know it means His Honour, the Lord and Master.

They call me Inkosi Kaas—pronounced like Cosy Coz—and just at first it has a decidedly familiar sound. However, The Pal duly explained to my offended dignity that it meant

something like "most great and beautiful lady," and straightway my ruffles were smoothed.

The Gentleman Farmer called in the afternoon, riding a milk-white steed, and looking very spruce. The Pal "pulled his leg" rather mercilessly about being overworked, but he took it very well. He is a good-looking, jovial man, and I hear he has a very nice house; but as you appear to have to ride down precipices and cross a rushing river to get there, I am doubtful if I shall ever see it.

My only woman neighbour dwells some nine miles away, across bogs and marshes and drifts and kopjes. It looks as if we should not get far beyond leaving cards on each other by post. Evidently sociability in Rhodesia depends largely upon the progress made by the inventors of flying machines. As usual, however, it is all right for the Lord and Master. When, I ask you, is it not? . . . Besides The Pal and The G. F., there is a soldier-man farming close by, and a Scotchman growing tobacco, and an Irishman

looking after some one else's farm while the owner is in England; and a sportsman playing at farming because he wants to live in Rhodesia and considers that the best reason for doing so. I wonder if they all live principally on bully beef and bread-and-treacle? If so, they look uncommonly well on it.

Thursday.—The Lord and Master drove me to town to-day in an antiquated old Cape cart belonging to The Pal. Ye gods and little fishes! shall I ever forget it? It took about two hours, and for the first hour at least I did little else but wonder which side we should turn over, and in what condition I might expect to find myself on the ground. Cape carts are built high, and they have a hood to keep off the sun and rain; and to be boxed up inside this hood, with one wheel going over stones or banks a foot or two high, is a most fearsome experience. Once, when my chin caught the shoulder of H.H., I nearly bit my tongue through, but I was so fascinated with the spectacle of what we were driving over, that I had scarcely time to feel the

agony. To add to the other delights, we were drawn by two mules, which, unless shouted at and hit incessantly, stood calmly and serenely still in the middle of the road. After the first hour, however, one grows callous. It has become apparent that a Cape cart can keep on its two wheels at an angle which scarcely any other cart would dream of attempting; and, which is almost more important still, that the two wheels will remain on the Cape cart against equally terrifying odds—and you settle down to the bumping in a resigned spirit, and congratulate yourself if you have neither false teeth nor false hair to be strewn ignominiously along the track.

When you return later, your chief wonder is why any one should want to go to town at all. To a new-comer it appears a most uninviting place. It contains over forty miles of roads of reddish sand, which blows all over everything in the dry season, and will not wash out; and becomes red mud which stains in the wet. There did not seem to be anything to do either when we got there, but I bought a few tins of something that was not bully

beef, a leg of mutton at 1*s.* 2*d.* a pound, some fish from the cold storage, and a tinned pudding, so we shall have a little variation for a day or two. The Soldier-man who is farming close by went into town also, looking very spick-and-span. He hailed me joyfully in the Cape cart with "Hullo! come in to do some shopping?" I waved the leg of mutton with a like joyful air, and cried, "Come over and help us: no more bully beef this week!"

I like The Soldier-man. He has crisp, curly black hair, and blue eyes full of humour, and a sturdy, British bull-dog air. I believe he was at Eton before he went to Sandhurst, and finally became a full-fledged gunner. Now he lives in a wattle-and-daub hut, and wears khaki slacks, and prowls about quite contentedly with his gun.

Saturday.—The locusts came to-day. Chip was in an awful state. He seemed to have some sort of a notion if he didn't tear about in a very flurried manner they would eat the whole farm up bodily. I thought they were very interesting, and took a front seat to see

the fun. They flew about backwards and forwards as the wind changed in great clouds, and all the natives had to turn out and walk about over the forage waving sticks and shouting, while some lighted fires to smoke them off. They remained several hours before they wearied of trying to get the best of us; and then we succeeded in driving them on to our neighbour's farm. Unneighbourly as this seems, it is considered quite the right thing to do, and the sooner you succeed the better you are pleased.

Chip took me for a walk in the afternoon, but it was a somewhat curious proceeding. We had to push our way through thick grass over our heads, so that the only scenery visible was blue sky with an occasional cloud, and now and then a kopje top. I held my parasol perpendicular, and pushed along like a young steam roller, expecting every moment to tread on a snake or be attacked by a lion. As far as I can ascertain, no one here has ever seen either—but that is a detail. One cannot be expected to dwell in the wilderness of Africa and not have the consolation of imaginary

monsters to make one feel splendidly brave. In a few weeks all the grass will be burnt off, but it does not appear alluring to picture a black world.

The Pal says the shooting will be improved, as patches of grass will be left for cover, and quite a number of pheasants, shrimpy, partridges, red-wing, and quail will be procurable, which is truly a mercy, as I am afraid to think what expressions Chip might use if he continued for long to see nothing to shoot but a blooming butterfly, or brought home one little dove.

Taking things all round they went wrong generally to-day. Our beautiful leg of mutton was ruined by Shilling, who positively cooked it in a frying-pan. The pudding I ruined myself by omitting to read the instructions on the tin, and untinning it before it was cooked. Then the bread wouldn't rise. It never does. If I ever saw any bread of mine rising I should be so thrilled by the spectacle I should stand transfixed. It isn't that I don't know how to make bread : I went to the Kensington School of Cookery on purpose to learn ;

only yeast in Rhodesia doesn't do a bit the same things as yeast in Kensington, and one has no idea how to cope with its eccentricities. We wrestle with it every other day, always in the end having to make a baking-powder loaf in a hurry, and leave the yeast in the sun to rise at its leisure. If things continue thus indefinitely, our garden will gradually become choked with tins of yeast put out to rise, and then one fine day no doubt they will all rise as one man, and foam and bubble over; and I and Chip and the house-boys will become embedded like currants, until The Pal or The Soldier-man comes to dig us out. Which reminds me that The Soldier-man sent me twelve beautiful fresh eggs this morning, and a bottle of fresh milk, our cows having not yet arrived. Yes, I like The Soldier-man.

As a matter of fact, there are a lot of nice men in Rhodesia, and most of them can cook, and sew, and housekeep wonderfully; and the majority of them are as happy-go-lucky and casual as children. It is remarkable how soon one grows casual out here. If there is anything to eat you eat it, and if there isn't

you go without. If a man has fever, he goes to bed and stops there, and when he is better he gets up; but no one worries—he least of all. If six mules die, you congratulate yourself that the other six are still alive; and if the locusts eat off all the forage, you are glad they didn't eat the barley too.

But through good and bad alike you bask in glorious sunshine, and marvel over wonderful sky effects, and know you have, for good or ill, one of the finest climates in the world.

H.H. says it is bed-time, and so impressed, not to say overawed, am I by the circumstance of his being addressed as "Lord and Master," that I dare only gather up my writing materials and obey.

THE DAM FARM,
June 2.

MY DEAR JACK,

Sorry I missed writing to you last mail, but was too much occupied getting my house in order. I'll try and write an extra long letter to-day.

You will observe I have changed the name of the farm. The other name was really quite impossible. Fancy coming seven thousand miles into the heart of the wilderness, to live in a house called Woodlands! Why, you would have put "Wimbledon" after it by habit, or Clapham, or Balham, or some such place.

The new name is far more appropriate in every way. It is derived, of course, from the fact that the farm is the proud possessor of the largest dam but one in the country. At least I think that is the case; and anyhow it is quite the largest of all anywhere round Hails-

bury. People from the town come out to see the dam ; and people on the spot have a habit of introducing it, in a haphazard fashion, into their conversation ; so you will easily understand how very appropriate a name it is. Of course one has to be a little careful when announcing it. I made a dreadful mistake yesterday. We paid our State visit to Government House, and the Bishop was there, and in the course of a friendly little conversation with me, he asked me where I lived. In a moment of awful forgetfulness I used the wrong article, and replied calmly, "At a dam farm ! . . ." If you could have seen the twinkle in the dear little man's eyes ! "Ah !" he said, "you must find it rather hot occasionally !" This little Bishop, I must tell you, has a reputation for being the best dinner partner in Rhodesia.

I have had a very busy time indeed over this getting of my house in order : and though it suggests at once a late popular play, I am bound to admit my occupation had not much in common with the celebrated character at St. James's Theatre. It consisted very largely in waging a furious battle against

fleas. Before we had been here many days I discovered that the Dam Farm house was full of fleas—or, if you prefer it, we will take a hint from Mr. Barrie, and call them "hoppers." Anyhow, they were here in legions. They not only hopped over the tables and chairs, but swam in the soup and the tea. I am not exaggerating: I protest here and now against the incredulous smile I perceive in imagination on your face. If you don't believe me, ask the "Lord and Master." He didn't believe it himself at first, so I had to prove it. I placed a basin of water on our dressing-table, and for the whole of one day drowned in it every hopper I caught. In the evening I invited his inspection. *He counted* 103. Then he gave it up.

The next day he soaked the house in Sheep Dip, and we all smelt of strong carbolic, and everything eatable tasted of strong carbolic, for about thirty-six hours. When I unburdened my mind to The Pal he only laughed. "Oh, that's quite a detail," he informed me; "at this time of the year any house left empty for a week or two gets full of fleas; and even if it

isn't empty, it is much the same, if you keep dogs and fowls and have a sandy verandah."

But this was not all by any means. The last man had a fancy for pigeons and fowls which he apparently invited into his house at all hours. Anyhow they stalked about throughout our abode, as if it belonged to them and they were playing at holding a Government House reception; and, as if that were not enough, they glared at me with studied insolence when I endeavoured gently but firmly to remove them. One still persists in laying its eggs on Chip's bed in spite of me; and another one still goes to roost behind the writing-table in the drawing-room. This last, of course, is open to argument, as the hen may be aware that the real term is withdrawing-room, and therefore feel itself perfectly in the right to withdraw there for egg-laying purposes.

Likewise the 40 lb. of ox, which Chip rashly bought from The Gentleman Farmer. He said he was sick of tinned stuff, and now we could have fresh meat for weeks. So like a man! In a few days it would have been so fresh, it would probably have skipped off home again.

As it was, it had to be promptly plunged into salt in the washing-up tankard—the only thing large enough to take it—and installed in the withdrawing-room to soak at leisure, there being no other indoor spot available.

Still, we came out in search of novelty, so we cannot complain ; and to have an ungainly piece of ox soaking in salt in the washing-up tankard in your drawing-room, accompanied by a roosting hen, a frog or two, and a battalion of "hoppers," touches quite a high level of originality.

Indeed, the novelty is never lacking.

I found a mule in the dining-room, one day, sniffing contentedly round ; and pigs and donkeys, and that ilk, have quite a nice friendly little way of making themselves at home on the verandah. On one occasion one donkey was chasing another one in headlong flight, and I only just had time to squeeze into a doorway, to save myself being knocked down. At the same time, I wish frogs had not a fancy for our bedroom. There is often one sneaking in a corner in the morning, and I feel I'd rather die than get out of bed in the night.

The lizards and chameleons I don't mind. One of the former has been pretending to be an ornament on the mantelpiece all the morning; and a fat chameleon lives on the verandah, and ogles me with his funny revolving eyes whenever I go near him.

The natives have an extraordinary horror of chameleons, and stare, fascinated, when I pick one up. If I carry it towards them, they run for their lives. I asked The Soldier-man about it, as he seems to be our brainiest neighbour, and he told me they had a curious legend about the chameleon being sent to look for heaven, but he was so slow, the gods sent a lizard after him; and the lizard caught him up, and passed him, and got there first. So, in some way a chameleon signifies to them, "missing heaven."

I think I shall like the natives when I get used to them, but they are comical creatures. Our house-boy, Tambo, who is as ugly as sin, is as vain as a peacock. He never misses a chance of studying his appearance in my looking-glass, and usually comes away with a smiling, self-deprecatory air, as if he would

say, "Beautiful as I am, I must not be over-proud of it."

One day I gave him an old cap of Chip's, and soon after I caught him struggling to obtain a side view with my hand-glass. It gave me rather a shock, not only at the idea of what he must be seeing, but also at the notion that he was possibly mimicking the Missus.

He is an ingenious boy, too. The other day I found him playing a tune on a most weird instrument, consisting of a bamboo stick and a piece of catgut. With reference to the latter, and desirous of airing my Kaffir, I asked him if it was "tambo"—the Kaffir word for string. He looked up at me with a slightly scornful air, and said, "No—puss," and pointed to one of my new kittens.

The cook-boy, I have discovered, is the proud possessor of a real piccaninny. He walked into the house one day carrying what looked like a very inflated, black india-rubber ball. Seeing my wonder and curiosity, he grinned all over his face, and said "Baby."

I ventured closer, and discerned the jolliest

little black piccaninny imaginable, calmly pulling faces at me from his father's arms. I gave him sugar, and pulled faces back again, until he was tired and gave it up.

The next day the mother of the piccaninny showed herself, coming forth from the "boys'" hut, and reclining in the sun in a picturesque attitude, about thirty yards from the house. As a bronze statue the effect was fine enough, but as I was momentarily expecting The Pal and The Soldier-man, I nervously suggested to her husband that she would look better *draped*! He grasped my meaning right enough, but the convulsed laughter that presently issued from the hut suggested that they were enjoying a huge joke at my expense.

We have a third servant now—a youngster, called out here a piccanin, which means bigger than a piccaninny and smaller than a "boy." His position is that of the "tweeny," as he does all the odd jobs, and waits on the other boys. He has a face about a hundred years old, and if he smiles he takes so long to make up his mind about it, that one half of his face has smiled and finished before the other half

has begun. He has his own ideas of helping, too. I chanced to go into the kitchen to-day, just as he was "helping" the potatoes from the saucepan to the vegetable dish, by conveying them thither in his greasy black fingers. I politely suggested that he should use a fork; whereupon he appeared to become transfixed—no doubt wondering if he should smile or not. I left him to make up his mind at leisure, and helped the remainder of the potatoes into the dish myself. If I had dared, I should have hit him over the head with the saucepan, as I believe that is quite the correct mode of procedure out here; but I am still so horribly frightened at my black servants, that I felt far more like apologising for the liberty I was taking.

I was also somewhat cowed after the results of my morning's work. It was washing-day, and a spirit of domestic energy most unfortunately possessed me when I rose in the morning. I decided that I would lose no further time in teaching the boys *how* to wash. Everything was to be done as it should be—starch and blue and all. While Shilling and Tambo,

looking very sorry for themselves, washed the clothes in genuinely hot water, I prepared two large basins, one of starch and one of blue. For once the clothes were washed fairly clean. But what of that?—by the time *I* had done with them they were all sky-blue, and as stiff as boards. That sky-blue aspect is getting on my nerves already. Indeed, I fear for my brain. Imagine a sky-blue table-cloth, and sky-blue napkins, and a "Lord and Master" attired to match!

I am sure you will be glad to know that I have heard further of the woman neighbour. The Pal saw her in town, and she told The Pal to tell me she hoped we should be able to meet shortly; but as her horse is ill, and I have nothing to ride, and nothing would really be much use to me except an aeroplane, it was a pretty safe "hope." I should be glad to ask her if she knows how to starch, and what is the correct treatment for Rhodesian yeast.

Really, one wonders the Chartered Company does not endeavour to cope with these mysteries, on behalf of the settlers. A little

handbook of useful knowledge dealing with such matters would be so much more to the point than harping upon milk and honey and fair promises. Some day I must draw up a sample copy of the booklet needed, and submit it to the Board of Directors. If you happen to be in love with any woman just now, who might be able to enlighten me, I wish you would get her to hold forth to you, and write it down for my benefit. I can't ask the Motherkin, because she would merely have an apoplectic fit if she discovered that I had to cope with such matters at all. When I write to her I dwell upon the milk-and-honey aspect almost exclusively, and draw recklessly upon an imagination capable of the wildest flights. I only hope I have not overdone it, and conjured up an Arabian Nights palace, in place of our little comfortless four-roomed bungalow, haunted by fleas, fowls, frogs, and an occasional mule.

Mind you never give it away, O brother mine! but let it be told from farthest India of the wonders of this sun-baked wilderness, where we regale ourselves on bully beef and

bread-and-treacle, spread generously upon a table-cloth of sky-blue hue.

And if it is still the General's wife upon whom you are lavishing your young affections, ask her, when you are next sitting out together under spreading palms, beside fairy fountains, in a rose-festooned garden, to tell you, for the love of heaven, how to starch clothes, and how to make bread.

Ever yours,

JILL.

THE DAM FARM,
June 14.

MY DEAR JACK,

Not in the mood to get a letter written this week: therefore enclose diary.

Yours,
JILL.

DIARY.

Monday.—Read a little, sewed a little, cooked a little, walked a little.

Tuesday.—Ditto.

Wednesday.—Ditto.

Thursday.—Ditto.

Friday.—Ditto. (Said d—— twice.)

Saturday.—Went to town to buy a pack of Patience Cards, and a book on Philosophy.

Sunday.—Played Patience, and read Philosophy.

Jill's Rhodesian Philosophy

THE DAM FARM,
June 28.

MY DEAR JACK,

I was glad I had bought my book on philosophy before your last letter arrived. If there is one thing I abominate, it is a person who begins a letter on the back page, then goes to the front, then all across the inside, and finally finishes up anywhere. Life is too short for those sort of people, and Rhodesia too hot. Of course, if you meant it as a puzzle, it was rather a good one, but you should have stated the fact, then I could calmly have burnt it unread. As it was, I felt you were merely competing with Lloyd George and his Budget —which no one has ever unravelled yet, and never will; and I bitterly resented it, because he has £5,000 a year to make and unmake his puzzles, whereas I am merely rewarded with a bursting brain after trying to unravel yours. I had to lie down to it at last—in a

hammock under the big banana—with two cats on my knee and four dogs reclining around. There I invoked the aid of the saints; I besought Heaven to have mercy; I made rash promises to various far-off shrines, before I achieved the unravelment. Finally I found it was practically all questions: What do we grow? . . . What do we live on? . . . What do we make? . . . What do we eat?

Then, in the very nick of time, The Pal strolled up to the house, bringing two more dogs; and by the time the crowd of canine species had sorted themselves to their satisfaction, and my two precious kittens had been rescued from perilous positions in neighbouring trees, I had so far recovered as to feel willing to abstract from him the information you requested. I sat him down in a big chair with leg-rests—a remarkable sort of chair that enables a man to tie himself more or less into a knot, and has a most benign and soothing effect upon him—and then I said: "Would you mind telling me, for the benefit of a far-off brother, what we grow? what we do? what we make? and what we eat?"

After that I sat myself down beside him, with a note-book.

But before I could extract anything from him with reference to farming, I had to listen gravely while he told me about his cat's kittens. I have not been in the country very long, but I have already discovered that one of the nicest things about Rhodesian men is the way they love their cats. When they are in an interesting condition they speak about it bashfully—but they almost always do speak about it, and it would be a grave slight not to appear gravely interested. When the cats are proud mothers they would as soon forget to greet you with the news on meeting, as forget their dinner. I have, in fact, not the smallest hesitation in stating that most Rhodesian men are as proud when their cat has half a dozen fine kittens, as the average home man is when he is himself responsible for an increase in the population.

The Pal's cat had given birth to eight kittens, so of course he was fairly bursting with it—particularly as The Soldier-man's last week had only five, and The Gentleman Farmer's

only two. Further still, this fruitful cat had saved all eight from sudden death by veldt-fire; and the recital of it was thrilling. As far as I could make out, the cat's home was in some long grass close to the house, and when she saw the fire approaching she hurriedly started to carry her family indoors. By the time the fourth was removed she discovered the fire was gaining on her too rapidly, and then, in haste, she called the cook-boy to help her.

But this, much as I love The Pal, is where my credulity gave out; if for no other reason than the fact that his cook-boy rejoices in the name of Sengermessario. A cat may have eight kittens—he says she has had twenty in the twelve months—but I defy her to pronounce a name that leaves me dumb. At the same time I quite believe she and her eight are now installed in his bedroom, and that every day he spends anxious moments trying to make up his mind whether he ought to drown a few or not, for the sake of her health.

Even in the town I found the same soli-

citude for her ladyship the cat. A well-known politician, with whom we lunched, cut up a delicious dinner at table for his cat; and when, later, I fell over two or three rampagious kittens playing leapfrog in the drawing-room, he informed me quite seriously they were rather a nuisance, but he felt the cat would fret if he gave them away. Personally, I could better imagine her offering up a fervent thanksgiving, but I was far too discreet to say so.

Now about these questions. I must answer them from my note-book, and if the result is a little stereotyped you must blame The Pal.

The principal crop grown in the country is mealies, which is the same thing as Indian corn or maize. They are planted in November and December, just before the rains, and reaped in May. A good return after the first year is ten bags to the acre, and a very fair paying price is 10*s.* a bag. There are some who insist they can be made to pay at 6*s.* 6*d.* a bag; but I have had time to observe already the statement is invariably made by some one who has never grown a mealie in his life, and is never likely to do so.

At an argument the other day, bearing on the fact of the Chartered Company buying mealies from the natives at a lower figure than the white man can afford to sell at, and the perfectly natural soreness among the colonists on account of it, a high Civil Servant stated that the white man ought to be able to grow mealies even cheaper than the black man. The Pal, who was present, clinched that argument pretty well. "Of course we could," he replied suavely, "if we each bought half a dozen black wives to do all the work."

I am rather longing to see the mealies when they are like fields of waving green corn. Just now they are merely an eyesore—being very dry, and withered, and untidy-looking. Potatoes do fairly from August till April, and are a three months' crop; but it is not easy to get more than 1½*d.* a lb. for them. And here, I find, there is yet another little grievance for the mere colonist. It consists in the fact that another high official in the Civil Service so far outdoes the last one I mentioned, that he proves what the price should be to his thinking by selling his potatoes, retail, to other

Civil Servants. The idea of a solemn and imposing high Government official selling a few pounds of potatoes to other Government officials and thus taking possible orders from the hardworking colonist would be more than aggravating if it were not saved by its humorous side—which consists very largely, to my thinking, in the fact that the potatoes were very poor; but a lesser official could hardly complain to his vendor, who was a higher.

Oats and barley and wheat do well under irrigation, planted in April, and reaped in September or October. Barley can be cut for green forage nine weeks after sowing. Tobacco grows well, and is proving a great asset to the country. The same may be said of cotton. Fruit does very well indeed, but so far not many kinds have been tried. Poultry needs endless care and attention, and even then the results are often disheartening. With luck, however, they pay remarkably well, as it is not unusual for eggs to be 4*s.* and 4*s.* 6*d.* a dozen. Other useful items to grow on a farm are beans, millet, and ground-nuts.

Now for your next question. What do we live on? Well, we have already discovered it is not easy to pay our way as we go along. We all get our groceries out from town, chiefly on Saturdays, because it is mail-day and market-day; and it is usual to run up a big account, and pay when the mealies or forage are sold.

As all groceries are extremely dear, and profits very low in comparison at present, it is necessary to eschew much that the "inner man" craves. Eggs and vegetables we propose to rely on the farm for; but The Pal is a very wet blanket on the subject, because he says they are such troublesome products they are not worth while. Enormous hawks have a tiresome habit of taking the chickens wholesale, and often killing full-grown fowls—while nimble black fingers have a remarkable aptitude for finding, and closing over, eggs. Frost and wild pig vie with each other in making the lives of vegetables a misery to them; and as often as not they give it up and succumb. Both The Pal and The Soldier-man buy all their vegetables in town; while The Gentleman

Farmer has a coolie growing for him, and selling the surplus for himself.

Catering is one of the departments in which I have the greatest need of my Philosophy book. You will no doubt think a cookery book would be much more to the point—but there you are quite wrong. A cookery book is of small service if you have almost nothing to cook, whereas a book on Philosophy can enable you to attain to a frame of mind in which you may imagine food where no food is, and persuade yourself a crust of bread in Rhodesian sunshine is better than a stalled ox in a London fog. Should it be very hot, fresh meat coming from the town may be quite uneatable when it arrives, to say nothing of the difficulty of sparing boys to fetch it when labour is so scarce. You thereupon eat tinned meat, either in its bald, unappetising state, or disguised in a weird and awful concoction of rice and potatoes. But what of it if you are a student of philosophy? Read what Marcus Aurelius says:

"*If thou art pained by any external thing it is not this thing that disturbs thee, but thy*

judgment about it, and it is in thy power to wipe out this judgment now."

What then follows? The flavour of unwashed nigger; the sameness of six days of tinned meat; the lack of flavour in tinned-milk puddings; the uncanny inelegance of something, originally tinned, disguised in filthy-looking rice and vegetables—all these things are the mere external aspect. The philosopher perceives it is merely his judgment that is at fault. He wipes it out; and incidentally wipes also the spoons and forks and plates bearing the finger-marks of the unwashed nigger; and he partakes of his repast as if it were a banquet from the gods.

Could a cookery book do more? Could it indeed do other than tickle the palate with vain and useless regret? No; since I have come to Rhodesia, give me my Philosophical Treatise, until I drop it overboard from a homeward-bound ship.

I think another of your questions was, what do we do? Well, we begin the day at 6 o'clock with two large cups of tea, brought to us by a nigger, who is only half-awake and shaking

with the cold. Then the Lord and Master gets up and goes out. About 8 o'clock he comes in for breakfast, and the "Light of his Eyes" is peevish or otherwise, according to what has already transpired in the kitchen. If, as is extremely likely, the floor is like a fowl-run, and there is almost no fire, and no wood to improve it; if the cook-boy, as is also extremely likely, is boiling two dirty eggs in the water he intends later for the tea; if the piccanin, with greasy black hands, is fingering the bread for toast; and if the house-boy has made himself ill eating the foul flesh of some dead diseased ox or sheep overnight—the thermometer will stand at Peevish. If these things have not happened, or if the Philosophical Treatise has proved equal to the occasion, she will merely be busying herself removing from the breakfast table such items as whisky, port wine, pickles, cheese, and biscuits.

After breakfast a strenuous morning of coping with the natives follows, interspersed with a good deal of firm-but-gentle removing of the fowls from the drawing-room and bed-

room, and of dogs from the most comfortable armchairs and cushions.

At 12 o'clock a weird and terrible noise produced by hammering on an old piece of iron calls every one to the midday rest of one and a half hours. We lunch frugally, and retire to our beds for a doze. At 2 o'clock the Lord and Master again departs, and the "Light of his Eyes" spends a couple of hours wondering what to do until tea-time. After tea, the atmosphere being now at its pleasantest, they sally forth together in the most highly approved matrimonial style, and go and look at the fowls, or a plough, or perhaps a sack of mealies. At 6.30 they return up the kopje side, and proceed to change into garments suitable to dinner, although the repast may again be only bully beef and potatoes. After dinner The Lord and Master sleeps serenely on a long deck chair, waking up occasionally to relight his pipe; while the Light of his Eyes spends another hour or two wondering what to do until bed-time, unless The Pal or The Soldier-man have turned up for a yarn, and to report upon the new kittens. In which

case we usually sit and listen to The Pal, who talks brilliant nonsense in a quiet, matter-of-fact way, with just a delicious suggestion of an Irish brogue, and the most alluring twinkle that ever shone from sleepy eyes. The Politician I spoke of as being a cat-lover in town sometimes comes out to lunch on Sunday, and he has a delicious twinkle, too. He is very interested in farming, and thinks he knows a great deal about it, but my private personal impression is that he knows far more about politics.

By the way, The Neighbour really is coming to see me, as her horse is quite well again now. She is a great friend of The Pal's, and he says what she doesn't know about Rhodesia isn't worth knowing. She writes articles and books and things—which sounds dreadfully alarming ; but he assures me she is not alarming in the least close to, and quite absurdly fond of cats. I wonder if I dare ask her how to starch, and how to persuade sour dough bread to soar ; or whether a literary turn of mind disdains such mundane trifles ?

I am going to start keeping an occasional

diary, which I shall post to you at intervals, instead of letters.

Good-bye. Must close now because The Soldier-man has come to tea. He says his kittens have just started fighting, and one of them can spit. I know, without any telling, that The Pal will insist that his can stamp and swear.

Yours,

JILL.

Jill's Rhodesian Philosophy

THE DAM FARM.

MY DEAR JACK,

Diary enclosed. The Lord and Master says I exaggerate, but that's only because he didn't write it himself.

Yours,

JILL.

DIARY.

Friday, *July* 4.—The Neighbour arrived to-day on horseback. She wore a khaki divided skirt, and was riding astride, and she looked as if she had waded through a river. This I found to be actually the case. "Boo didn't like it," she informed me. "Every time I got her near the water she stood on her hind legs and protested, so I had to get off and wade through, and she had the grace to follow me, looking very ashamed of herself. She'll go over it all right next time. She never lets me do that twice. She's the best

friend I've got in the world. I grew quite thin with worry when she was ill."

I can't tell you what's she like, except that she is delightfully British. Fair hair, with a glint in it, blue eyes that look straight at you and laugh, shapely hands as brown as a berry, and a sort of thoroughbred, well-groomed, sportsmanlike air. Nothing in the very least suggestive of newspaper articles and up-to-date novels and that sort of thing, for which thank heaven—though I suppose she really does indulge in them. However, I felt I could forgive her even that, if she continued as fresh and jolly as she seemed on first acquaintance; and I really was glad to see her. She stood on the edge of the verandah and surveyed the landscape, just as The Pal did that first morning.

"Looks pretty awful to you, I expect," she said, "just all dried-up grass, and dried-up mealies, and baked soil, and parched trees. Oh, I know just how you feel about it: as if Rhodesia was a blotch of yellow ochre, under a blinding, blistering sun. But it isn't, you know. I could show you things even now;

but I'm not going to. It is better for you to find them out for yourself. It's all part of the process."

"Then you once felt as if . . . as if . . . it was all a blotch of yellow ochre?" I suggested.

"Oh! my word! didn't I! . . . It all got horribly on my nerves at first; I thought I should go mad with it. I'd have gone any moment to the ends of the earth, if I'd had the money. I hadn't, and I've lived to be thankful for it. I felt as if I was buried under a heap of stones, and every stone was a kopje. Life was as dull and flat as a bread-pudding. I was awfully fond of my man, until we were stranded on that farm together; and then I nearly got to hate him too. We bored each other to tears. I used to feel sometimes I'd sooner see the face of any enemy I had in the world, so long as it was a different face. But it was a phase. It's just Rhodesia's way. She gives you a jolly bad time first, to see if you are worth bothering about, I suppose, and if you win through she suddenly turns round and smiles

at you, and compensations crop up in all directions."

I did not speak because I was so interested, I only wanted her to go on. I felt all in a moment it was the very thing I had come from England to see. Not the Hausfrau, who will settle anywhere, given a husband and children, and house to worry in ; but a sportsman Englishwoman, who could shine in any assembly at home, and yet give herself to the colonies, so to speak, and create her own atmosphere there, and come up smiling in spite of everything.

"Just wait," she ran on, swinging round with the frankest, freshest smile. "Show Rhodesia you don't mean to be beaten, and she'll end by heaping you with good things and good times. It's like those clumps of tall grass all over the veldt: when you look at them casually, they are hideous dry stalks decked with dry, desolate-looking grass seeds. They appear like that for some time, and you hate them ; and then one day you chance to go round the other side and see them with the sun shining through ; and it's a revelation.

There are shades of green and gold in those dry-looking clumps to make a painter weep for envy. But you've got to go and look for them, and to find them out for yourself. Or it's like a butterfly with its wings closed—all grey and nondescript and commonplace. But if you look long enough, and see it open its wings to fly, you'll see beauty that defies description. In August and September Rhodesia is like the butterfly with its wings open, and all the world can see its loveliness; but to love it properly, and to get absorbed into the very heart of it, you've got to love it all the year round, in the dry season as well as the fresh. But you can't do it in a hurry. It's an art. It's something you have to learn. It's all just knowing about the wonderful colours in the dried grass when you get it against the sunshine, and the wonderful glow of the veldt at even, and the glory of the morning when the world is silvered with dew. It's the colours in the sky, and the colours in the soil, which you only see when you are in tune with the land."

"Mr. Dyas tells me you write?" I re-

marked. "An occupation like that must have been a great boon."

"Of course it has—but it's nothing to getting genuinely fond of the country, and feeling that you care more about seeing it prosper, and beat all the countries, than any other thing in the world. So Pat told you I wrote, did he! An adorable person, Pat—I'd like to sow Pats broadcast all over the colonies, just to make people laugh when there's nothing whatever to laugh at. I expect he's over here pretty often."

"Yes, pretty often. I call him The Pal; and our other visitor The Soldier-man."

"That's Jack Beverley, of course—and he's a dear too. You are lucky in your menfolk anyhow. Does any one come from town?"

"Yes—Colonel Stoddart occasionally. He knows my husband's people at home."

"Another of the right sort. That man will do anything for the country; and yet they all decry him, and pick holes and throw stones at him. Luckily he doesn't mind. There are some fearsome small minds about in the crowd. The sort of minds that can't appre-

ciate any genuine, disinterested endeavour, without crying out that it is all self-interest and notoriety-hunting. I suppose they judge by themselves. There was a case a little while ago, when a woman made a bold attack on certain existing abuses in connection with the natives; and they called her anything and everything, and just went out of their way to make things unpleasant for her. Just littleness, and pettiness, that's what it is—like spiteful women. But of course it doesn't matter: Rhodesia knows who is her friend, and she will see fair play in the end."

She gossiped on for an hour or two, and I enjoyed the best afternoon I have had in the country.

When she was going she arranged to send her precious horse over for me one day. "I want to show you my daughter," she laughed; "she's the lustiest young Rhodesian in the land, and her name is Rhodesia Elizabeth. We call her Desia, or Betty, as the mood takes us. She's only a year old, and she can laugh out loud." A little later, she said, "Get your husband to buy you two or three cows, and

some oxen to be trained. You'll feel quite different when you possess something here. It gives one a homey feeling right away to have cows of one's very own ; and the oxen you can make money over." Then she cantered off with a gay backward smile, to ride eight miles alone across veldt, caring as little as if it were across Hyde Park.

To-night, after dinner, I sat on the floor, with my head against the Lord and Master's knee, and I said :

"Give me one or two cows, Chip, that will have baby calves to take care of. I want to possess something. I want to get the homey feeling somehow, as soon as possible."

He kissed my hair, and said he would try and get them before the week was over.

I know now why the nice Rhodesian men are so fond of their kittens. It's having something little and helpless to take care of, gives them the homey feeling.

Monday, July 7.—We have had a festive week-end. The memory of it makes me shudder, with shudders that are almost sobs, even yet. How did I ever dare? I ask

wonderingly, what strange outbreak of temerity led me into it.

It was the Lord and Master's idea. It would be. He was ever a sociable soul, and he wanted to do a little entertaining. So he began by inviting Colonel Stoddart, The Politician and one of the most awe-inspiring inhabitants of the town, for the week-end, to shoot; and to this he added a pleasant little verbal invitation to the Resident Commissioner and his wife to drive out to lunch; and, as I subsequently found to my cost, pleasant little verbal invitations to various other acquaintances; while I, myself, invited The Soldier-man and The Pal.

I am now recovering slowly. My first instinct this morning, had I a horse, would have been to ride across veldt and kopje, through river and marsh, to The Neighbour, for the comfort of her cheerful optimism; but, that being denied me, I sit with my Philosophical Treatise at hand.

The first disaster of these memorable festivities came early, and was directed at The Politician.

He, poor dear man, was conversing amicably with me, in his charming, interesting way, while Chip went down the steep hill to the stable to order the horses, and get the boys together for their shoot.

Suddenly the spirit took him to stroll up and down the verandah admiring the view; and then another spirit, of the bad, wicked, little demon species, led him to seat himself casually on a cane-bottomed, little-used chair apart from the rest. He had scarcely seated himself than, with a horrid sort of yell, he sprang to his feet. In alarm I sprang up likewise, gazing with open mouth into his blanched face.

"What is it? . . ." he gasped. "Something stung me—O Lord! . . . What the devil! . . ."

I gazed at the chair in fascinated horror, and descried, beneath the cane, still clinging to their little hanging nest, several hornets. One, which had probably been sat on, buzzed angrily round.

"I'm afraid there is a hornets' nest under the chair . . ." I began hesitatingly, and hardly knowing whether to laugh or cry.

"What shall I do? . . . Oh, what shall I

do? . . . " gasped the victim. "Hornets! . . . think of it—hornets!"

He was growing more and more distressed, and I more desperately at a loss; for no etiquette book, nor "Where is it," nor Household Guide that I could remember, had ever hinted how a hostess should act if it happened that her most honoured guest sat down on a hornets' nest suspended below a cane-bottomed chair. Feebly, and with frantic, futile brain-racking, I suggested Hazelene Cream, or Zam-buk; but by this time the gallant Colonel's nerve was re-establishing itself, and his horror-struck countenance veering towards a smile. I thanked the gods under my breath, for I knew that in two minutes I should either laugh outright, or become hysterical with suppressed feelings. In the end the laugh had it, for suddenly he looked straight into my eyes, and burst out laughing himself. "I suppose I shan't die of it? . . ." he said, and my defences gave way. By the time he reached the Lord and Master the pain had practically subsided, for hornets' stings are less violent out here than at home; and from what I learnt

afterwards Chip became almost helpless with laughter, at his own description of the incident.

I, meanwhile, had too much else to think about, and prepare, for a luncheon to be partaken of by six people. I put on a big apron, rolled up my sleeves, and set to work immediately to bustle Shilling and Tambo round, quickly getting hot and sticky and shiny in the act. At a critical moment of stirring a custard steps and voices were heard on the verandah, followed by a knock on the door. Imagining it could only be The Soldier-man and The Pal, I called out, "Go away—I can't see you. I am stirring a custard over the fire, bathed in perspiration."

An ominous silence quickly alarmed me.

"Is it the Boss Long One?" I asked, signifying The Pal.

"Icona (no)," replied Shilling, coldly indifferent to the dawning horror in my eyes. "Two boss from town."

I went out as I was, to apologise; there seemed nothing else to do; and on my door-step I encountered two immaculately

dressed and groomed young men, who had ridden out from town at my husband's invitation.

I gave one glance, then backed away again, conscious only of my heated, shining face; and from the far recesses of the dining-room I bade them welcome as well as I could, mentioned I would send drinks out to the verandah at once, and suggested they might like to take a stroll in search of Chip and The Politician. They fell in with my retiring mood most thoughtfully, and strolled away directly they were refreshed.

But in the meantime a new problem was staring me in the face. Two extra for lunch, and every chair, every glass, every spoon and fork already bespoken. Absent-mindedly, from very perturbation, I put my trifle and my custard aside on a shelf, and, with a casualness that I have since perceived was inexcusable, merely informed Shilling that, when cold, he was to pour custard over the trifle. Then I proceeded, still in my apron and heat, to help Tambo lay the table, never dreaming that in Rhodesia it is customary to take a

journey before the heat gets too trying, and luncheon guests may arrive about eleven without comment.

Anyhow, it was only a little past eleven, and I was in a condition I should not care for any one to see me in, when The Resident Commissioner and her ladyship, his wife, arrived palpitating at the top of the hill, before my astonished eyes.

I longed to put my apron over my face, or my face under my apron ; but how could I, unless I wept ? and why weep at a little after eleven in the morning ?

Lady Wentworth grasped the situation instantly, and was most charming. "Don't take any notice of us," she said ; "I know all about the worry of extra preparations on a farm. Send us a little milk or lemonade out here, and pretend we have not yet arrived."

"We brought two officers from the Police Camp along with us," Sir Guy informed me, with a cheerfulness that made me long to do him an injury ; "they were at our house yesterday when your husband called and invited us, and he most kindly included them. They are

watering their horses now, and won't come up just yet."

I tried to look pleased, to murmur something quite inaudible about being delighted; but my face grew redder and shinier, and I only wondered whether any form of prayer to heaven would rain down spoons and forks and chairs. For ten minutes my state of mind bordered on imbecility, and then I remembered The Pal was coming, and was comforted; for I defy even Rhodesia to create a tight corner from which he cannot find a way out. At twelve o'clock, clothed becomingly and in my right mind, I stepped out on to the verandah to formally greet my visitors, and was quickly chatting away to them in a brief spell of blissful forgetfulness. At 12.30 an ominous silence in the direction of the kitchen began to catch and claim my attention. Finally my endurance gave out, and with anxious feelings, and a hurried excuse to my guests, I went to investigate.

What I found struck me dumb. There were the potatoes, unpeeled; the vegetables, unprepared; the meat presiding calmly on

the table, uncooked; and no signs of any boy whatever. Yet I had told them lunch was to be ready at one o'clock.

With indescribable sensations, I hastened to their living-hut, to find it empty.

Nothing but silence and emptiness everywhere. They might have all three been spirited away into space. I called. I called again. My voice was angry, imploring, coaxing, infuriated in turn; but no answer came to it, until a small piccanin strolled leisurely up from the compound.

In a voice to alarm a warrior I demanded of him where Shilling and Tambo were? With wide eyes of dread, he stared at me fascinated, and said nothing. I shook him. I had to do something, and it was the only action that suggested itself at the moment. Finally, I gathered from his gestures that my house-boys were somewhere in the direction of the dam. Immediately I went in search. Gay laughter greeted me as I drew near, and with a sudden, unaccountable instinct, I took a path hidden by bushes, until I came near enough to peer at them through a thick

shrub. It was as well. In the dam, stark naked, were my cook-boy and my house-boy, washing *the only garments they possessed.*

Once more the situation struck me dumb. What had been mere inconvenience before, had become tragedy. I tremble for my mental equilibrium even yet, when I review what passed in my mind during the first moments of revelation. They could not put on wet clothes—they had no more—they could not prepare dinner and wait at table unclothed. What, then, was left to be done? At the exact moment when my brain had reached bursting-point, a gay whistle came along through the orchard, and The Pal strolled up. I held out both my hands to him. I almost kissed him. "O Heaven-sent," I breathed to his astonished ears, "as you love your mother, get me out of the dilemma I am in."

The first thing he did was to peer through the leaves. Then he began to laugh. "I don't think you ought to be here at all," was his only attempt at consolation.

"I don't want to be here," I retorted; "but if you can tell me how to get lunch

cooked for one o'clock by those two unclothed niggers, you will have earned my undying gratitude."

"Don't you worry," he replied, still smiling: "the impossible is always happening in Rhodesia. That's why we come; at least, it is one reason why we stay when we are here. Another is that we can't get away again. If you've got a piccanin at the house, send down some old garments of Chip's, and I'll have them hard at work in five minutes. They are simply doing it to please you, you know. They wanted to have clean garments for your luncheon party."

Later on, when the machinery was all started going, I drew him aside and told him of those four extra men for whom I had neither spoons nor forks nor chairs.

"Oh, that's quite simple," was the calm rejoinder. "We must get them lost for an hour or two. Just long enough for the plates and things to be washed. See! I'll do it myself. It's as easy as A B C. I've often lost people before now, when they were a nuisance. Give me something to eat, though,

or I shall be so hungry, I shall find the right path too soon."

I regaled him with cake and milk and biscuits, and blessed his name as he departed, still smiling, on his errand of mercy. Just as he was vanishing, however, a sudden inspiration made me call him back. "I only wanted to tell you that the Colonel sat on a cane chair this morning, and there were some hornets underneath, and one——" The twinkle in his eyes made me suddenly break off and begin to laugh helplessly. "Yes, it did," I finished.

"Oh, poor devil! . . . " he exclaimed, and I heard him chuckling to himself all the way down to the dam.

I returned to my guests on the verandah much comforted, and awaited with no small interest the course of events. Chip returned first, accompanied by The Politician and The Soldier-man. His first remark filled me with joy.

"That ass Dyas has taken those other four fellows round by the Bushmen's paintings, because he says a boy told him two leopards were

there. Did you ever hear of such a wild goose chase? I told him we should not wait lunch, but he wouldn't hear of coming back with us."

"How absurd!" I murmured; "but of course we cannot wait. I'm afraid his companions will get dreadfully hungry."

I got up to go indoors and see that everything was ready, and unfortunately Chip followed me.

We were alone a moment.

"How's poor . . . ?" I began.

"Did he tell you?" he managed to say. And then we both broke down.

"Oh, don't," I gasped; "it's so unkind to laugh."

"I can't help it," he spluttered. "If it had been any one else. . . . Don't catch my eye at lunch, or I shall never be able to keep my face straight."

"Ought I to offer him a cushion to sit on? I simply can't. I . . . " but I could get no further.

"No; he's all right now. He laughs himself every few minutes. Took it like a brick, didn't he?"

"He was scared out of his life at first; and I couldn't think of anything to offer him, except Hazelene Cream . . ."

That started us both off again, and I bolted for the kitchen.

But it was not the end, for we had scarcely sat down to lunch before the gallant Colonel gave a sudden little gasp, and then a splutter, and in two seconds he and Chip and I were choking down hysterical sobs of laughter, to the wonder and amazement of our companions. Finally, he related the story himself, finishing up naïvely with the information that it was not nearly so bad as it sounded.

Before we were many minutes older, another catastrophe had quite overshadowed all the rest, and my cup seemed full. It came with the sweets. Instead of bringing in one dish containing trifle, and another with tinned fruit, Tambo placed before me the trifle, covered with a thick yellow-looking fluid; and the fruit in the tin basin in which I had poured the custard. With manifold misgivings I helped Lady Wentworth to some trifle, and kept one eye surreptitiously on her, while I continued

to help my other guests. The next moment I dropped the spoon in horror. She had taken one mouthful and been immediately seized with a violent choking fit. We patted her on the back, and handed her glasses of water, until she showed signs of recovering; and then Chip tasted the trifle.

"Good Lord!" he exclaimed. "It's mustard!"

Yes, it was mustard. Shilling knew nothing about custard—how should he? He carried out that casual order of mine to the best of his ability, by making an original sauce of mustard; and all my carefully prepared trifle had to be thrown away. Poor Lady Wentworth recovered by degrees, but I observed afterwards she attached herself more noticeably to the Colonel, feeling, no doubt, they were fellow-victims in misfortune at having ever accepted an invitation to visit my abode at all.

Just as we were leaving the table The Pal turned up with four ravenous men, inwardly swearing at the useless tramp they had been inveigled into; but they should not have minded, seeing how much they enjoyed their

meal when they finally got it, with their full complement of knives and forks apiece.

It was, indeed, for me that the day held most of chagrin, but—well—I had my Book of Philosophy.

I think I may claim the incident of the mustard particularly as a practical illustration of my theory, that in Rhodesia a cookery book is of less use than a philosophical treatise. No cookery book in the world, unless it was written in Mashona—a language which has never yet been put down in black and white—could have prevented Shilling spreading his filthy concoction over my trifle.

But see what I gain from my Book of Philosophy.

Feeling ready almost to cry my eyes out over the disasters of the day, I mine into its pages of gold, and here is the beautiful thought Marcus Aurelius presents to my tired soul, to help me pull myself together :

"*As a pigge that cryes and flings when his throat is cut, phancie to thyselfe everyone to bee, that grieves for any worldly thing, and takes on.*"

Strengthened and refreshed, and placid, I can even pass on my consoling thought to the Lord and Master a little later, when he enters in a turmoil because a wild cat has killed his three best hens. "My dear," I breathe soothingly, "do not take on so. Marcus Aurelius says that is what pigs do when their throats are being cut."

Wednesday, July 9.—I have seen my first big veldt fire. It was splendid. I should like two a week. I dare not say so before the men, but I think it all the same. A veldt fire for them means a hurried rushing off to the scene of action, shouting to every available boy to follow; and then they all run—run—snatching at branches as they pass, to meet the on-coming fiend.

This was a terrific fire: a wanton, revelling, pitiless sort of fire, that dodged round kopjes, and jumped roads and streams like a live thing. The Soldier-man dashed over to help, for it threatened his farm as well as ours, and The Pal had to fight his side of it alone, in case it took a sudden freak into its head and started gaily for his forage shed. I watched it from

the verandah, and my heart danced positive cake-walks of glee over the thrilling excitement of it. Of course I was sorry things should be burnt, and the dear men flustered, but then I was almost starved for a happening, and now, at least, something was happening. It is a weird, incomprehensible sight—the far-off columns of smoke, the far-off glow, the far-off leaping, revelling flames. I could not see the forms of the fighters, straining every nerve to beat it out, but I could see when, just as the fire-fiend seemed conquered and slain, he threw himself suddenly into the air in transports of delight from quite another corner, and with a hissing and sizzling easily imagined, went racing off before they could reach him to suppress him.

And then a fiendish glee took possession of me. It was not over yet, then. There would be still further happenings. I was like a child at a circus procession. A gap comes, and the eager youngster thinks it is the end, and wishes dolefully it would all come past again; and then suddenly the people in the road part, and another gilded car appears, and the child's

spirits go up at a bound—there may after all be more, much more to come yet.

There was in my case ; for after a little the leaping, dancing, frolicking flames grew too much for the beaters in one corner, and tearing past them, gave a sort of mad leap into a little dried area of mealies, belonging to The Soldier-man. Nothing I have known in the country equalled my condition of consternation and eagerness mingled ; it made me feel quite alive again, and I blessed the leaping fire-devil. Neither did the excitement end there. Ahead of the new line of flame were two huts belonging to some cattle boys—two good huts, right in the enemy's path. A road ran between that would probably save them ; but oh, how I hoped it would not ! I saw some boys rushing from another direction, sent probably by The Pal ; and I saw a black figure close by commence to burn a safety belt round the first hut, but all the time the flames were leaping and tearing along to the road at a terrific pace. I held my breath, and stood taut and strained. Would the road save the huts, or would the fire-devil leap it ? I knew anxious eyes were

strained from wherever black figures showed against a light background ; I saw the rescuers crashing down through rocks and brushwood ; I saw the road was wide. But the flames were fierce, and there was thick dry grass on either side. Perhaps a few sparks would leap across. Perhaps the gaseous vapour that goes ahead would ignite the fringe opposite.

I grew more and more taut and breathless. The fire itself was not more fiendish than I, in my devouring hunger for every sensation I could squeeze from this hour of unlooked-for thrills. Surely, surely the huts were doomed. With all my heart and soul I longed to see the barrier cleared, and the flames forging ahead. A few minutes longer, a few seconds of breathless suspense, a cowering of the line as one momentarily checked ; then a plunge, a leap, a bound, and I clasped my hands ecstatically as the flames appeared on the other side of the road, and raced with deadly fury up the hill. Another breathless hush, when two or three black figures ran forward to meet them, and beat with frenzied haste upon the roaring, crackling line. Then a

scattering to right and left, a little eager exclamation from the watcher afar, and in a flash, one grass roof was swirling, leaping flames.

I sat down then. The zenith was achieved. The flames would be quickly checked ahead; but what of that? What cared I any longer? The two huts were blackened heaps of cinders.

Wanton waste? . . . useless labour? . . . fiend-like destruction? . . . What of it? A brain is more than a wattle-and-daub hut, and mine was petrified for want of a sensation. Activity possessed it immediately. I became gay, joyful, optimistic. The three men came up to tea blackened and weary, and they found a face wreathed in smiles, instead of a plaster mask. Two niggers' huts were not worth more than that.

Only they do not like my philosophy. It quite annoys Chip. He was bewailing a burnt heap of hay (not worth calling a hay-stack), and The Soldier-man was bemoaning his few dried-up mealies, and The Pal swore mildly because all his boys had had to leave

their work. Just to console and soothe them, I fetched my treatise.

"Don't worry," I urged; "be philosophical. Take a hint from Epictetus. Listen to his sage advice. '*Seek not to have things happen as you choose them, but rather choose them to happen as they do, and so shall you live prosperously.*' Now, what could be more simple? You have only to pretend that you wanted the fire, that you lit it on purpose, and drove it towards the hay and mealies and huts; and here you might be all smiling joyfully at having achieved that which you set out to achieve."

But they do not take me seriously. The banana-skin Chip threw lodged in my hair, and stickied all one side of my head; and then The Pal rubbed it on the other side, "to make them match," he said; and The Soldier-man squeezed a half-eaten banana into my hand; and then Chip held me down into a chair, and threatened to put a whole banana in my mouth at once unless I said that all this banana frivolry was exactly what I chose to happen, and that therefore I was thoroughly enjoying it.

Later on we sat and watched the fires still smouldering here and there on the hill-side opposite—like the lights of houses on a cliff-side seen from a steamer at sea; and because my inert brain had been thoroughly awakened I was able to drink deep draughts of appreciation of the great, grand, boundless, awe-inspiring infinities that wrap one round on an African starlit night.

Thursday, July 10.—The Soldier-man managed to borrow a horse to-day, and took me for a ride. It was glorious. A cool, invigorating breeze, bright sunshine overhead, stubbly grass to canter over, and a country to ride in not like any other country I had known. A country of park-like scenery in places, where trees climbed the undulating ground, and nestled in hollows, and waved to us from hill-tops; where little streams threaded their joyous way, banked by a rich and rare fringe of reeds and grasses, under which the water crooned to itself as it caught the sunbeams; where birds of wonderful colouring flew from tree to tree; where huge boulders of granite

dotted the hill-sides, and gleamed white beside the foliage—turning many a kopje into a turreted and battlemented castle.

We rode first to see the Bushmen's paintings. The way led through a pathless wood—just trees everywhere, with an occasional glimpse into far blue distances. Then we came to a river, and had to search for the drift, which in Rhodesia means the one spot, perhaps for miles, where it is safe to cross. Anywhere else is probably soft mud, where horse and rider may both be bogged. When we found it, it proved difficult of manipulation, and my horse floundered wildly into the water off a stone which rolled over when he trod on it. The Soldier-man laughed reassuringly. No doubt he read my thoughts in my face. It is quite possible I looked scared to death. "It's all right," he said; "you will soon get used to Rhodesian drifts. They nearly always do something unexpected."

Then we rode up to the imposing little kopje, standing all alone—as is the way of kopjes—in the middle of rice fields; where we occasionally had a nasty jar when our

steeds stepped suddenly into rice pits. But one quickly forgot the perils of the way when the kopje was reached, gazing in wondering curiosity at the relics of the strange little men who had painted the indelible pictures on the rock. The colouring is wonderful, and the animals easily distinguishable as different species of buck. Before I started I had a vague notion in my head of seeing something like the pavement pictures in London, and just at first they seemed a little tame. But when The Soldier-man pointed out to me how remarkable it was no one knew what they were painted with, and how strange and incomprehensible that these little savages should have been able to draw thus on the face of the rock, I banished the memory of hideous wooden, pavement pictures, and revelled in the weird sensations suggested by that far-away past in which they had been painted.

Where we looked out across the land the only landmark was a cluster of native beehive huts, forming a native village, nestling at the base of a rocky kopje, upon which an

immense block of granite was balanced, looking as if a touch would push it over. Beyond was a blue, dreamy distance, where range upon range of kopjes lay dreaming in the sunshine. It was a wilderness and a desert—a vast, untamed country, inhabited by uncivilised beings, which gripped and held the imagination.

"Do you think we ought to be here?" I asked The Soldier-man lightly. "I feel as if I were intruding."

"Intruding upon what?"

"Intruding upon some one else's world. This belongs to Bushmen, and dwellers in caves and huts. You and I . . . we . . . we savour too much of motor omnibuses, and dreadnoughts, and aeroplanes."

He laughed, and rode forward—a goodly figure of a man, with crisp black hair and clear blue eyes, and the hall-mark of Britain's best.

At the top of a ridge, where we could see farthest, he drew rein, and looked at the far-reaching, far-spreading prospect with eyes that loved it.

"Isn't that good?" he said. "Whether we are intruders or not, we have at least brought

it appreciation at last. How does it strike you?"

"Oh, I like it," I told him. "It appeals powerfully. It's all new, and fresh, and young, and untried. It's like going back to the Creation. You and I are looking at a world God has just made, and wondering what is going to happen in it. Nothing at all has happened yet, you see, so no one can tell. I hope God is going to try another plan altogether, don't you? One in which duty won't always be something detestable; and where goodness isn't almost always dullness; and where little children will stop little much longer, and miss out the tiresome, awkward years altogether; and where one can be quite sure that dogs and horses go to heaven."

On the return journey we crossed the river by another drift—a worse one. This time there was a steep bank leading down, then a strip of water about a yard wide, and a steep bank up. The Soldier-man went first, and he looked round just in time to see the catastrophe. The bank was slippery with drought, having hardness and no grip; and my horse

got his speed gear mixed. That is to say, when his front legs had just reached the water, his back legs suddenly started hurrying, with the result that they overtook the others and got entangled; and in his efforts to extricate his unmanageable legs, he rolled over into the water. The next I knew I was scrambling up the opposite bank on my hands and knees, while my horse splashed and strained to get his footing. On the top of the bank I sat down, hatless, breathless, and with most of my habit round my neck. The dear Soldier-man fought like a Trojan to wear an expression that held only consternation and regret; but the odds were too much for him, and a timely laugh from me saved him from bursting. We both laughed till the tears ran down our cheeks then, and it was many minutes before I was calm enough to even think of remounting.

"You will have to ride astride, you know," he urged, as we once more started off. "You might have had a nasty accident then had you been wedged in your saddle. It is far safer, far easier, and far better in every way in this country."

I said I would try, and it is my firm intention to make a first attempt to-morrow. The Soldier-man said he would come and help me, but I am not at all sure whether the impromptu garments I must rely on for a start, will make it feasible. Not that I mind much with him. He is such a dear, I feel as if I had known him all my life. Whatever else Rhodesia may or may not achieve, she knows how to breed men who can be bricks to women.

Saturday, July 12.—I tried this morning, and I rue it yet. It was all right until the horse trotted, and then I never seemed to come down in the right spot—one moment I was nearly over his tail, and the next I came in harsh contact with the saddle-bow—and from side to side I swayed like an ill-balanced car. I felt as if I wanted four pommels to cling to, and cried out to The Soldier-man in pity to stop my horse. I could not even rein him in myself without nearly going over backwards.

We walked until my nerve had recovered

itself; and then he said, "Try a canter. It is far easier than trotting." I took his word for it—alas! the day—and the next I remember was a sensation of being poised on a ledge, as I lost my balance altogether, and went off backwards, with a sort of somersault action into the grass. I am still recovering, and I am glad to-morrow is a day of rest.

The Neighbour has written to tell me I must be sure and go in to the Agricultural Show next week. She says I shall see some products of the wilderness that will astonish me, not the least of them being the town ladies all in festive attire. "We show nearly our whole *ménage*," she writes. "There are dogs, cattle, sheep, pigs, fruit, crops, vegetables, home-made bread, home-made butter, home-grown honey, and home-cured bacon going off at daybreak. We also show ourselves. My man rides his pet polo pony, and I ride 'Lady Betty.' I may have Rhodesia up in front of me, as it is not fair she should be left out; and there is as yet no prize for babies, which is a grave mistake, and shows great lack of foresight. If I ran the Show I would give a prize for the

finest baby, and the cleverest baby, and the goodest baby; and I would give the best prize of the whole concern to the mother who had the biggest Rhodesian-grown family. For it's a sure thing what Rhodesia wants more than anything else just now is babies, babies, and more babies. And yet the Administration, far from encouraging the species, looks coldly on at prohibitive fees and conditions which would kill out the race in any country. So like a commercial company! I should like to read a paper at the next Board Meeting, 'How not to populate a Colony,' and throw in a few trenchant remarks concerning the high fees of the hospital and hostel."

Monday, July 21.—Only think of it! we have had a most exciting week with lions. I thrill at the mere thought. We were calmly seated at breakfast—just as any one might be in a pretty little country house in England, except for the black attendant—when excited voices outside caught our attention. Then Shilling burst into the room, and informed us there were lions at M'Combi's Kraal, three

miles away, and they had killed three oxen during the night.

"Lions!" I cried eagerly—"real, live lions? Oh! how splendid!" My greed of sensations rose speedily. "I hope they are coming this way," I finished.

"I hope they have killed some one else's oxen," was the Lord and Master's comment.

As it happened, they had; but we both had our wish, because the next night the lions killed two pigs a mile nearer in our direction. It is not too much to say, that that day I listened continually for their roar, and gazed with fascinated eyes in the direction from which they were reported. They might not be there at all. No one could assert where they would be during the day, but that did not alter the fact that they had been there only a few hours before. I felt like a guide-book. It was difficult not to talk in set phrases. My instinct, when any one appoached, was to wave my hand blandly to those interesting kopjes, and remark, as if reading from printed pages: "Behold the wilderness of Africa, where lurk the beasts of prey. In the silent hours of the

night the lion, the leopard, the jackal, the hyena, come forth from their lairs and prowl around, seeking what they may devour. Sometimes, perchance, it is three oxen, sometimes, mayhap, it is two pigs. Gentlemen, we are in the heart of the wild places; before you is the hunting-ground of the King of Beasts."

The pretty little commonplace country house in England vanishes to nothingness. It is a bungalow, with a leaking roof, and doors that will not shut, surrounded by bananas and coffee shrubs and pine-apple plants, beyond which prowl menacingly the beasts of prey.

The following day the bulletin was even more thrilling. Chip and The Pal and The Soldier-man went down to investigate, and searched about near the cattle kraals for further evidences of their whereabouts. They stayed two hours without having any luck, and then started home again, sending a native to another kraal, to fetch boys to help him watch through the night. A hundred yards from the spot where he left them, he ran right into one lion, strolling down the path towards him. Ap-

parently they stood and looked at each other, and then each made a bolt simultaneously—the boy being unprepared, and the lion not particularly hungry. Or perhaps he did not want to spoil his plans for the night, which, it transpired later, consisted in a carefully-thought-out raid upon that particular cattle kraal. He would, however, have shown greater generalship if he had settled the boy first, for as it happened he and some of his "brothers" were waiting for the attack, and drove off the besiegers gloriously with flaming branches.

Things were getting very warm, however, and something had to be done; so Chip had two platforms built near the kraal, and he and The Pal and The Soldier-man took their guns and prepared to sit up all night. The Soldier-man occupied one platform, accompanied by whisky-and-soda and sandwiches; and the other two made themselves comfortable on the second; after first arranging that The Soldier-man should be the one to give the signal of departure, when he thought it advisable to give up the watch.

It was a very cold, frosty night, and

the two watchers sharing a platform sat close together to keep warm, while The Soldier-man rolled himself up in a huge military overcoat. Thus they sat on in the dark and cold, till The Pal insisted he should perish miserably if they stayed a moment longer. Chip was less decided. He appears to have remarked that they arranged to remain until The Soldier-man gave the signal to retire, and it was not very sporting to go before.

The Pal solved that difficulty with his usual brilliance. "We'll go and tell him to give it now," said he, and climbed down to the ground, stamping his feet and hugging himself to get warm. Chip steadied his chattering teeth, admitted himself nearly frozen, and did likewise.

They walked across to The Soldier-man's platform, and said his name. There was no reply. The Pal climbed up, and peered over. "Well, I'm blowed!" he exclaimed—"he's sleeping the sleep of a new-born babe." It was true. Rolled up in his enormous coat, forgetful alike of lions and cold, The Soldier-man had slept peacefully for an hour or two, while the

others shivered and fretted, awaiting his signal. A heavy hand descending suddenly upon his prostrate form gave them their revenge in a measure, for The Soldier-man started up with a sudden and violent fright, believing both lions, at the very least, had sprung upon him.

After that they all came home, but a message at daybreak to say the lions were prowling near, re-aroused their enthusiasm, and they went hurriedly back. This time Fortune was kind, for as they approached cautiously, they came upon the two beasts, munching at an ox they had just killed, behind a rock. They gave Chip the first chance, because he saw them first, and had been the ringleader of this last excursion; and, with a skill that made my bosom swell with wifely pride, he knocked his beast over first shot.

The Soldier-man and The Pal both fired at the other as he was making off; but they fired twice each, before he dropped, in the act of leaping a high rock to safety.

The corpses were brought home in state, and duly photographed in many positions; and their skins now adorn our front garden, pegged

out in the sun. They are my proudest possession, and I have hurriedly despatched a note to The Neighbour, inviting her to come over and feast her eyes upon them with me. Chip loves them even more fondly. They claim his last glance at night and his first in the morning, and often he strolls casually down to one, for the rapture of touching it. He is arranging to send their claws home to his uncles and cousins and aunts, though; which somewhat sobered my enthusiasm, as it is rather distressing nowadays to be married to a man who distributes the claws of his first lion wholesale among his relations. Indeed, for a few moments it so depressed me that I had to have recourse to my friends the philosophers; only to find that such a circumstance had not come within their experience, and they had no advice to offer on the subject. Not to be done, I turned philosopher myself, and evolved this trenchant sentence: "If thy husband be a trifle old-fashioned, bethink thee that he does not drink; and if he be somewhat over set-up with himself when he shall have achieved that which many men have not,

bethink thee that at least he has done nothing for which he shall deserve hanging."

I think even Epictetus could hardly have said it better. There appears to be a fortnight's diary here, so I will post it to you to-morrow, O brother mine.

Good-bye.

THE DAM FARM,
August 12.

MY DEAR JACK,

I am glad you are there, and I can write to you; for Death—the merciless, the terrible—has come among us, and my heart is full to overflowing, and there is no other relief.

I dare not write to the Motherkin of death—she with her boy one side of the world and her girl the other, and her heart so eagerly listening and waiting for the postman's knock that brings the weekly mail. And I cannot say it to Chip because he is so busy and so occupied; and if I wrote him a letter he would think about sunstrokes and things.

But you are there—and I need no more, you dear old childhood's friend! Surely one of the best ideas God ever had, was a brother.

And it is death that I must write of to

some one to-day—cold, crushing, numbing, bewildering death.

The dear Soldier-man *is dead.*

I say it to myself over and over, for the suddenness of it baffles and puzzles me, and sometimes I wonder swiftly if it is true. I ask myself the question. I ask it of the swaying bananas, the far kopjes, the wind-swept skies, that he loved so, and in the eyes of his favourite setter lying beside me is the answer : "dead—dead—dead."

I rest my hand caressingly on the setter's head, and she makes a tiny acknowledging movement, and gives me one upward glance from eyes full of intolerable pain ; but neither of us speak—neither of us has any word or thought in our mind, but the echoing sound of "dead—dead—dead."

With her it is a hopeless, numbing pain, that stifles all other feeling. She seems to have forgotten hunger and thirst, and the joys that are left. The voice and the touch that were all her life are gone, and her world holds only emptiness. Always she stays near me, and wherever I go she follows me, but I

feel her heart is broken all the same, and she is pining away.

We went together to his deathbed, in the hospital in town. Colonel Stoddart sent out his carriage with a message, that Captain Beverley was dying, and he had asked for his dog and for me. We galloped the whole way back, and I had Babs on the seat beside me, with my arms round her. But she made no protest whatever at the strange proceedings. She had not seen her beloved master for a week, and her instinct told her she was going to him. He was almost past recognising us when we got there ; but I brought Babs close to his bedside, and lifted his hand on to her head, and he smiled as if he was glad, and his lips moved. I leaned down to catch the whispered word, and with difficulty he managed to breathe "Love to Mother."

They took us away then, Babs and me, and some one put us into the Colonel's carriage and told the boy to drive us to his house. I do not know who it was, and I did not know where we were going, but it did not seem to matter just then—we only clung to

each other in dumb, inarticulate sorrow: she instinctively conscious that she had lost everything; and I saying over and over, with a sense of impotent, helpless pain—"Poor mother!—poor mother!"

I seem to have been saying it ever since. All the others say "Poor Beverley," or "Poor old Beverley," or "Poor old Jack" . . . and down in my heart I answer back, "Poor mother!" . . .

It was so swift, she would have to learn it by cable. Think of it!—a life-sorrow coming to you all in one or two seconds! A second to open the fateful envelope, a second to read its terrible message, then a world of utter darkness and utter pain.

They gave him a military funeral. I was glad. It was right that they should. Was he not a Soldier of Progress, in the foremost ranks of those who serve under the Banner of Civilising—one of that fine band of Gentleman Rovers, whose dauntless pluck and worth it takes a Kipling to sing? Year after year England sends them forth. Ship after ship drops down the tide carrying her representative

of the nameless army—the man who goes to the front without orders, without payment, without uniform, without any distinguishing badge. He goes because the far lands call to him. He goes because the horizon taunts him. He goes because his soul cries, "Never mind the discomforts and hardships : see what is beyond—beyond." Sometimes he is to be found in the first-class saloon, sometimes he is dreaming a little apart in the second or third, sometimes he is nursing his soul in patience under a steward's uniform, sometimes he is "before the mast." But whether he goes first or third, whether bondman or free, he is part of England's might and part of England's greatness ; for there is one thing he always leaves behind if he is a true Briton, and that is his heart. And if the dread portents of the present times become yet more tangible and real, and if the mother-country sounds an alarm across the seas, it is the vessels hastening homewards that will carry them in her saloons or on her decks—hurrying, hurrying from the far-off lands in answer to her call.

Unless a socialistic, revolutionary England is waving the red banners of discord, and listening, as one possessed, to the wild, rabid outpourings of her new type of statesman, who has nothing whatever in common with Gentlemen, either "Rovers" or otherwise. Doubtless then they will stay away, and look with pensive eyes to their far horizons, dreaming sad dreams of an England that was—and that is no more.

But I am wandering far from that dear Soldier-man, who lies so quietly with the far horizons all around him. Babs and I stood together beside his grave the day after he died, for in these far lands burial must needs follow immediately on death. We did not go to the funeral—we did not want to; but we went up quietly together, when the ceremony and display was all over, and he was alone. We did that because we believed it was what his mother would like, and all day long we were thinking, thinking of her.

We did not know her, but we knew he was her first-born son, and ever since our first mother Eve hid in her heart a deep anguish for the absence of the transgressor

Cain, the world has known that a mother's heart must hold its best tenderness for her first-born. So Babs and I—she with her dear dog's eyes of infinite, non-comprehending pain—stood quietly together beside the new-made mound, and touched tenderly the farewell wreaths, for the sake of the mother who was breaking her heart on the other side of the world.

In the town, away below us, where he had been a great favourite, there was a sense of gloom and loss ; the greater that he who had been cut off had gone in the very prime of his youth and strength. At the Club, at the houses he visited, at various gatherings—over and over they would say his name, venting their sense of sorrow always in the same phrase—"Poor old Beverley!"

By the graveside, tenderly rearranging the fast-drooping flowers, and fondling and caressing his broken-hearted dog, I breathed still, "Poor mother! . . ."

When I turned away at last, I could not help feeling a little pitifully how much England owes to her "mothers." He conquests, her

progress, her forward march, are paved in all directions by the bleeding hearts of mothers. And they are so quiet about it. They give so bravely. And if the stern decree goes forth that the beloved son returns no more, robbing them even of a last word, of a last look, of a loved grave, they take the pain into their lives as a part of them, knowing that it will stay until the end, and that they can only endure. Mothers of England, I salute you ; it is always to you, first of all, that the nation owes its greatness.

The Soldier-man died of fever. I am afraid he contracted it the night they were out after the lions. It was bitterly cold, and he took a chill, and neglected it. Fever followed, likewise neglected. I could not get to him because I had no horse, but I sent him soup and jellies and milk puddings, the boy always bringing back the answer that he was much better, and would soon be well. Then Chip went over, and grew alarmed, and The Pal was called in to consult, and between them they managed to persuade him to let them take him in to the hospital. Next came the

carriage and the message ; and almost before we realised he was seriously ill—he was gone.

How I shall miss him !

I look round over the familiar lands, to where in the distance is the roof of his dwelling, and everywhere is a sense of loss. I see him in my mind's eye striding down the hill, or striding up it, always cheery and gay, and wondrously sympathetic for the little new-comer, who is trying so hard to become acclimatised and naturalised to a life utterly and absolutely different to anything known or expected.

Babs, his beloved setter, is silently hopeless, but I cannot take it like that. All my soul is full of protest, that he should have been taken and others left. I look to the far blue kopjes, and I think a little yearningly of the toll they have exacted from the white man ere they yielded to him—of the bitter price of Empire, written in a land like this, not upon fair white pages in neat black type telling of prowess and splendid endurance, but in white, bleached bones lying out on

the hill-tops and in the valleys, where the forerunners fell unnoticed and unsung, making the pathways for those who should follow.

It was a worthy thought of their great Founder to lie out on the hills also—out there with them in the wilderness, one with those who had followed him, instead of under some imposing monument in the heart of civilisation. The hills that were good enough for them were good enough for him, and if his bones do not lie, as so many of theirs have done, in the sunlight, one feels it is not that he claims more than was given to them, but that the spot may be known where he chose to rest, alone in the wide silences, surely nearer to the heart of his beloved country than he could ever have been in an orthodox burial ground.

The imagination, reaching whimsically forward into the unknown, pictures a wonderful hour when he might perhaps lead them all as their head before the Great Judge. "These are some of those," he might say, "who, whatever their faults and weaknesses, gave their lives ungrudgingly for the cause of civili-

sation, unknown, unrewarded. Great Father of all, let this thing be counted to them first and foremost, that their failings may be judged in the light thereof."

In a quiet little spot upon our farm there is the grave of a white woman and her child. Think of the pathos of it! the unutterable sadness! Often when I pass near it I involuntarily stand still. I look across the blue kopjes and sunny skies with a feeling too deep for words. Death is always so lonely. To have been left behind here in the wilderness, perhaps after a long, wearing fight against the hardships of colonial farming life, strikes a sense of pity to one's very soul. Yet it must be so common over the wide world.

I heard of a settler the other day who worked hard for eight years to make a home for the girl he was engaged to, and then with great gladness brought her out to it. A year later she was suddenly taken ill, and died before he could get help. And then, so terrible sometimes are the far lands, he had to take her dead body himself many miles to the nearest railway, and thence to the nearest town

to get a death certificate and bury her. Afterwards he had to go back alone.

One dare not dwell on it. Truly the far lands claim their toll in untold sorrows as well as graves.

I heard of another colonist, a Canadian one, whose girl-wife died at the nearest hospital when her baby was born. And in the dead of night, unknown to any one, he contrived to carry her away in her coffin back across the prairie to the little cabin home, and there bury her where her grave might be in his keeping, giving what poor solace was possible.

And in Australia I heard of a settler who lost his wife after one short year in the same way, only under their own roof. And the next morning he staggered out of the little home, and never crossed the threshold again.

What anguish is written down in earth's lonely places! What tears like blood-drops course down hardened, weather-beaten faces unknown and unheeded! One can but hope and trust it is God's way of keeping the soul of humanity young and tender and brave.

I won't write any more to-night; I am

too sad and too weighed down. Death bewilders me, and the stars frighten me, and it is as though the far horizons flaunted their invincible remoteness before my shrinking eyes.

JILL.

Jill's Rhodesian Philosophy

THE DAM FARM,
August 25.

MY DEAR JACK,

The Neighbour came over yesterday, because she said she knew I should be thinking too much of The Soldier-man. It was good of her. He was her friend too, an older friend than he was of mine, and The Pal says she has felt it dreadfully; but she seemed to have forgotten that in her determination to help me through. She talked to me in her fresh, breezy way, and I felt better just for the sight of her. She seemed to know exactly what I was feeling, and why I felt it, and all about me. I suppose that is her love of the land; she has become a part of it, and knows just how its phases act and react. It is as if she had two babies named Rhodesia, one a child and one a country, and she gives the best of herself to both.

"Of course you are hating it all," she said,

"and feeling that the country is not worth the sacrifice of useful lives and the forfeiting of so many of the home interests. It is perfectly natural that you should; but I hope presently you will outgrow the feeling, and become a staunch Imperialist, and settle down happily among us. You see, after all, one is achieving Empire-work here, whereas in the overcrowded spaces of England one achieves little else but pretty new frocks and prowess at games. A country like Rhodesia is 'worth while' a thousand times over, even if it claims useful lives, because it is so rich in possibilities for those who come after, because it is so intensely British (God grant we can keep it so!), and because some day it may be an immense and powerful asset to the British Empire. Nothing good is to be had without paying for it; and the men who die now are paying the price for their country."

"If only it could have been some one less missed," I suggested—"some one who is a cumberer of the earth."

"Ah! there you look at it in the wrong light. The men who come out here and die

through their own excesses do not come into the big general scheme at all. Any new country is sure to be a sort of dumping ground for the worthless who can be got out of England; but they are mere flotsam and jetsam and pass by on the tide. In some mysterious way a death like Jack Beverley's counts. We have got to accept it like that, and keep our eyes to the front, and push on to the goal ahead. I hope it doesn't sound heartless to you. It wouldn't if you knew how much I admired and liked him."

"Oh no," I said, "you could not be heartless. One has only to see you, to know it is not in your composition."

She was standing on the edge of the verandah, very upright, with shoulders thrown back and head held high, and I watched her eyes as they sought the far horizon, full of untellable things.

"I should think nobody ever guessed you were a writer-woman?" I remarked, a little ambiguously.

She laughed, and seemed much amused. "My man says I don't look the part enough.

He thinks there'd be more money in it, if I contrived a more weird and grotesque appearance. As a matter of fact I'm not a writer first of all; I'm a Rhodesian, and I love my country. And I want to make other women love it if I can. The men take to it naturally, like ducks to water; but most of the women in the outlying districts have to acquire their affection; and I think the acquiring is often harder than it need be. They don't know enough about it before they come, for one thing; and they are not sufficiently provided with the Spartan spirit that is necessary—the kind of spirit that sacrifices the present for the future, and can find some sort of satisfaction in helping to clear the stones out of the path for future generations."

"Doesn't it sound rather heroic?" I ventured; "and I would so much rather be comfortable than heroic."

She glanced round with a delightful smile.

"You're rather a dear," she said: "I love a woman who likes to be comfortable; and they usually end by being far more useful in the world than the severe, stringent, sacrifice-

everything-for-work female. Well, we'll make you comfortable in Rhodesia by-and-by, if you stick to us; but I'm afraid it's a sure fact you've got to be heroic first to win through."

Chip came up to the house for lunch then, and she entertained us hugely during the meal with a description of a luncheon at her own house the day before, when the Administrator, his wife, and another lady had driven out to see her. By some mischance, the note telling of their visit had not reached her until an hour or so before their arrival, and both her house-boys at the moment were busily engaged cutting each other's hair, first one performing a little and then the other. The result of this process was, that one boy had half his head shaved like a billiard ball, and the other half covered by a woolly mat; while the second boy had his cut in places, like a French poodle.

"Of course it was impossible for either to finish," she explained, "so they had to wait at table looking like two Christy Minstrels some one had been playing a practical joke on.

I've got a new cook-boy, who doesn't know much," she ran on, "and he rather startled me by sending in soup plates to each of us first of all, after I had ordered no soup. I wondered what awful concoction he had foisted on to us, and was relieved to find it was only the bread sauce intended for the fowls. The Administrator thought it was porridge, and politely began to eat his, supposing it to be the correct thing in the wilderness. The next shock I had was the potatoes in a glass dish; and he sent in the coffee with the sweets; but it didn't seem to matter much, and Lady Hall thoroughly enjoyed the scramble."

"Are the boys always tiresome, and dirty?" I asked her.

"Oh, indeed no," she cried. "I've had one boy I wouldn't change for any servant I ever had in England. But he came from the north, about five hundred miles away, and he has gone back for a holiday. I'll try and get a message to him, to tell him to bring a 'brother' down for you. I can't tell you what that boy did. He kept the linen and silver beautiful; washed, starched, and ironed to perfection; valeted my

man like a white man-servant, and valeted me also if I left garments lying about in my room. He would fold them up neatly and put them away ; which had its trying side, because when I lost a thing I never knew his particular word for it, so he couldn't hunt it up for me without producing everything in turn until he reached the right one. That boy washed his glass-cloths and tea-cloths every day, and put them neatly away without being told. If I had visitors unexpectedly he always knew exactly which things I wanted used ; and if I was too lazy to attend to the flowers myself, he arranged them with taste, and with a distinct eye to effect. Of course I miss him dreadfully, but he will be back soon, and I'll do my best to get him to bring his double for you."

I thanked her volubly, and mentioned that, far from keeping their glass-cloths and tea-cloths clean, my boys had an unpleasant habit of mopping their faces with them when they got specially hot and perspiring.

"Oh, your man must knock them down for that!" she said. "It's no use scolding and talking at them. One under the left-side jaw

from the Boss will give you peace in the kitchen for a whole week. They understand it so much better."

"My man can do anything with boys," she continued; "they're tremendously fond of him, and yet he is not at all lenient. He is absolutely just, though, and much more patient than most, and they know how to appreciate it. And then he is good to them when they are sick; and he shows his approval when they are working well. Talking of being sick, the women come to him now to be doctored."

"But how can they tell him their ailments?" I asked.

"Well, as far as I can make out, they stroke their 'little Marys,' with a circular motion, and tell him sorrowfully that 'little Mary' is very sick."

Of course Chip and I shrieked at her; but she only went on to inform us proudly that her man had concocted a wonderful medicine for them, made up of Cooper's sheep dip and castor oil, and that it was in very great request. Another useful remedy they had, she told us, was a pot of moustache pomade, left behind

by some male visitor, and which they kept specially to rub on cuts and bruises, because it made them sting, and that was quite sufficient to persuade a nigger he was being cured fast.

"But you know some of them really are dears," she finished. "One of our boys had a baby very sick last week, and Dick went over to doctor it several times, and very nearly saved it. It was rather a long way off for me to go, so he poulticed it, and fed it with warm milk and a little brandy himself; but it was too far gone before they told him. The poor mite's father almost kissed Dick's feet for gratitude; and when it was dead, they came to the store, and spent their last two shillings on a piece of white 'limbo' to wrap it in for burial."

"Of course I am a great believer in the native," she told us; "he is capable of extraordinary development—though whether it is wise to develop him as far as he is capable, if we want the country for white men, is a point I am not prepared to give an opinion on.

"In Nyassaland they teach them almost everything. I was talking to a man the other day who had just returned from a trip there, and he told me that when at Zomba he was invited to inspect the Public Works' shops; and on proceeding through the electricity, fitting, blacksmithing, carpentering, and erecting departments, where there were probably between three and four hundred men employed, there was not a single white worker. In the stationery section, which consists of a building three or four hundred feet in length, divided into rooms, each containing machinery, he said that every single bit of printed matter —newspaper or book—is turned out by natives, and even bound by natives, under the superintendence of one white official; and it was just the same in all the public departments.

"Every single building, too, was put up by natives, including the masonry, bricklaying, carpentering, and plumbing. Rather different to the Mashonas," she finished, "who can't even go straight, if you peg a line along the ground for them. Houses built entirely by

Mashonas would lean in all directions, if they succeeded in standing up at all.

"No one knows, I believe, why a Mashona cannot make a straight path, but must needs double his distance by zig-zags all along it; but possibly they have some notion of an artistic effect."

Chip seemed frightfully interested, and the two of them discussed the black races for quite an hour, while I imbibed information from both, in a drowsy fashion.

Then The Neighbour said she must go, and Chip went for her horse, and we were alone a few minutes.

"Cheer up," she said kindly. "You know you are awfully lucky to have any one like Pat Dyas living near. I'd give anything to have him for a neighbour. He's the most cheering, invigorating person in the world. You know he was all dyspepsia and whims in England, before he came out here; and look at him now!—he has walked his five hundred miles at a stretch several times; and he can eat the most appalling concoctions I have seen, even in Rhodesia. Look under-

neath the grey, flat surface—that is all the country asks—and she will show you all sorts of delightful things."

When she had gone, I proceeded to take her at her word, and I discovered that the prospect before me, where some early ploughing had been done, revealed a wonderful colour effect, from the different shades of soil, cunningly blended together. There was black earth and red earth and chocolate earth, and down below them a wonderful patch of brilliant green, which was young oats grown under irrigation. Certainly no English soils that I have ever seen could produce such an effect, and I was still admiring it when The Pal toiled up the hill in his usual disreputable attire, and begged for a cup of tea.

"The Writer-woman has just been here," I told him, "and she spoke of you. She congratulated me on having you for a neighbour."

"Very kind of her! and was that what made you look so thoughtful?"

"No. I was putting her advice into practice, and 'looking underneath' for the things to admire and get fond of."

"And how were you getting on?" with the twinkle growing in his eyes.

I felt an answering twinkle shine suddenly in mine. "Very nicely indeed, thank you. I was admiring the colour of Rhodesia's dirt."

He bubbled approvingly, and asked me if I was still finding my philosophical book useful?

I told him, "Very. It is especially encouraging when one has a bad attack of the blues." He inquired if I had had the blues, and I admitted that I had, and he wanted to know what the Philosophers said to me.

"Well, this seemed the most appropriate," I replied, picking up the book and finding a particular passage:

"*What art thou, that better and divine part excepted, but, as Epictetus said well, a wretched soule, appointed to carry a carcasse up and down?*"

We both felt quite unaccountably happy after that; and he said he wished Chip would engage a wretched soule, to carry his carcase up and down our house kopje when he came to see us, as it used up too much of his spare energy.

A moment later he was telling me how the eldest kitten had caught its first rat, under the boards of the dining-room floor, adding a graphic description of how they now formed hunting parties to explore the lower regions, while the mother-cat kept watch at the exit in case they lost their way. "When she thinks they have been hunting long enough, she calls them, you know," he said. "I'm sure there never was such a cat before."

"So am I," I assured him. "Why don't you buy her a little horn to blow? . . . and put her in pink? . . . ."

The Lord and Master calls—I must needs go. Good-bye, little brotherkin.

JILL.

Jill's Rhodesian Philosophy

THE DAM FARM,
September 20.

MY DEAR JACK,

It has rained. You won't perhaps think that much in the way of news, but read the accompanying, and then you'll understand.

The Writer-woman sent it over with a little note, in which she said: "This is what I mean by looking underneath. Thought it might please your fancy. I scribbled it for you after the storm. The Pal told me he found you pensively admiring Rhodesian dirt! Excellent: I love you both. When he is describing how his eldest kitten has caught its first rat, I could fall on his neck and kiss him. Fortunately, Rhodesia is here to do it for me. He asked me if she had caught a rat yet!! I said, no, but she had caught two fleas! . . ."

How is it you never mention the General's wife now? Is it because her sister is staying

there? Why don't you tell me what the sister is like? Are you in love with her? If so, I hope she'll say "no" twice, so that you have to ask her a third time. Then I shall know you both knew your own minds.

Best love in haste,

JILL.

Please return enclosed.

(Enclosure)

"THE SUMMER RAIN."

(An Atmospheric Guest Night in Rhodesia.)

It was a night of revelry among the Kopjes.

Such a night as the Psalmist might have had in his mind when he wrote the quaint line, "Why hop ye so, ye high hills . . . ?" for of a surety, the kopjes of Southern Rhodesia were dancing a jig with extraordinary velocity and vigour.

But that came later.

At first there was only a whisper in the trees, like water hurrying over stones; a sound one would scarcely notice in the Old Country,

but fraught with import to listening ears over here.

Think of it! ye dwellers in mackintoshes and umbrellas; ye rain-soaked, mud-splashed islanders of the Northern Atlantic! Five months of steady sunshine under blue skies, with almost always a refreshing breeze.

But five months is enough, for by then the ground has become baked to adamant, the rivers are running dry, and the lack of moisture becomes trying to beast, and bird, and man alike. The corn lingers over its growing, the flowers droop in hesitation, and the trees badly need a spring cleaning. In the towns the dust gets beyond all bounds. It is in the cupboard and in the store. It is served up with dinner and lurking in tea. It is found in beds and on pillows; and the best housewife despairs.

And then there is a rumour of rain; and parched nature and humanity alike revive at the mere thought.

The rumour comes first in that particular whisper among the leaves—the little new leaves that are so full of secrets which they tell each

other all day long—only, over this particular secret they make such an unwonted fuss that they give it away at once, and the humans know all about it. So do the buck, and hyena, and jackals; and the birds twitter with a great laughing to think the leaves are so silly.

But in any case the secret would soon be out, for gay, boisterous, rain-scented winds come dancing among the kopjes in gusts, and at sound of them the rivers raise their voices as well as the little leaves, so that there is quite an unusual bustle going forward in every department.

The men of two or three seasons sniff the air, and remark in a casual way, "The rain will come to-night," as if it were the merest commonplace.

But the new-comer is conscious of a pleasurable undertone of excitement; a feeling that to-night will be an epoch in the year; that great things are going forward among the mysterious dwellers in the atmosphere. So he waits and watches till the real revelry of Nature's great Inauguration Night begins—the first rain of the summer season.

All the powers, it would seem, are generally invited to that mystic meeting. Almost the whole family of winds, the brilliant lightning, the autocratic thunder, the thrice-welcome rain, with perhaps a special guest in the way of a whirlwind, or torrent, or thunder-bolt.

The new-comer, with every nerve strained to see and hear whatever goes forward, notices that the guests do not all arrive at once. The more commonplace ones come first, and the notable faction later.

So the winds play about a good deal, and have a regular rough-and-tumble romp, before the real business of the evening begins. They play hide-and-seek among the kopjes, and have a great deal of fun on their own with the humans. First they blow a sweeping gust into one of his foolish little openings in the wall, and run riot among pictures and mats and curtains ; and then, when he has carefully closed up the opening, they tear round to the other side of the house altogether, and burst into quite other foolish little openings, till the poor human really does not know how to

guard against them, without shutting his house up altogether and being nearly stifled.

As soon as it is dark they have better fun still, for the humans have foolish little lights then instead of the sun, and they blow out as easy as winking. All that is necessary is for one wind to slip round one side, and another the other side, and then they both blow at once, and out goes the light!

Of course, later on, when the rain joins them, it is even more jovial, for then they can splash water into the room and make a lovely mess; and if the human comes out looking angry, they have only to throw water into his eyes, so that he cannot see, and scuttle away to some hiding-place.

But when the grandees arrive, these mischievous sprites have to retire into the background. The whisper becomes a loud-voiced swishing and whistling, and away in the distance the lordly thunder-spirit announces his coming with much beating of big drums. Black night has galloped up in her chariot, accompanied by mysterious flashing lights, that enhance her solemn deepness, just as she sets

off their brilliant glow. The kopjes seem to rear their tall heads with a new sense of importance, as if awakening from their long, lazy bask in the sun, to the recollection of the great anniversary about to be celebrated. Of course, without them the whole proceedings would be immeasurably tamer, so no doubt they feel justified in standing very upright and giving themselves all manner of airs and graces. They feel very scornful of those self-important little humans in their rabbit-hutches of houses, on an occasion like this—as, indeed, do all Dame Nature's Inauguration Night guests.

For really they have most absurd notions of their powers, these humans. They think, because they can dam rivers, and imprison electric currents, to a certain extent compelling some of Nature's votaries to be useful to them, that therefore they are equals, or even superiors, to the great powers of the atmosphere.

Whereas, if it were not too utterly silly and trifling, any one of those powers could swallow them up in a twinkling—they and

their rabbit-hutches, and dams, and currents, and everything else—could just sweep them out of existence as if they had not been. And to see them strut about, with their little heads held high, and their little necks screwing this way and that, as if they owned the universe! Oh, it was really too funny!

Some of the powers often had a quiet laugh over their airs and graces. A quiet laugh too over their stupendous bridges, and wonderful railway lines, and remarkable drainage systems. They might be all very well so long as the powers were content to smile in good-humoured enjoyment. But once let them get angry—or even mischievous—and where were their wonders then!

They fared badly sometimes on the Grand Inauguration Night, but it was not, as a rule, from malice on the part of the revellers. They did not meet together for mischief on that occasion, and if a roof came off during the night, or a dam burst, or a drain got choked and resulted in a flood—well, it was probably the human's own fault for not having made

them more secure. The men of two or three seasons understood about this, and if they were the right sort, they had their goods all safely sheltered and secured, and merely looked on with a casual air.

But the new-comer continues to gaze in ever-increasing fascination.

He notes the coming of other winds, with more important voices and manners, which buffet him rather rudely as he stands on a good observation point. He sees a mysterious suggestion of movement among the familiar kopjes, with strange flashes of broad daylight in the density of night, while above the clouds a very madness of riot cleaves the air with roll on roll of deafening thunders. Is there war between the light and the dark? he wonders . . . are the powers of hell let loose? . . . or is it only revelry? . . .

Every moment the din increases.

Now a continuous succession of those wonderful daylight flashes lights up every stone and every tree—distinguishing clearly between the green and golden corn, the red and verdant leaves, the beaten track and pathless veldt.

Accompanying is a steady succession of volley on volley, as of great guns—the very sound itself waxing riotous as it plays about among the hills.

The new-comer, insignificant of insignificant humans, gazes on, fascinated, awestruck, too lost in wrapt wonderment to dream of fear.

Everything seems working up to some supreme moment, and, with straining nerves, he waits.

Meanwhile the revelry increases.

How they play about the poor rabbit-hutch, these mysterious powers, now and then seeming almost on the point of picking it up and shaking it, as a dog a rat! How the kopjes leap and dance in the flashing lights! How the river roars and hurries! How the trees hug themselves and sway in riotous excitement! while like a continuous undertone is the croaking of frogs, that nearly burst themselves to be heard, and the persistent whirring of crickets and grasshoppers.

The new-comer is conscious of a desire to be assigned some part also, however humble;

but evidently the powers draw a line there, for the very most he can do is to throw back his head and drink it all in with passionate appreciation.

And even while doing so, the Guest of the Evening, for whom all the revelry is in progress, will probably give him a friendly slap in the face.

For he comes at last—he, the long-of-tarrying, the long-expected—in a lull, a breathing hush to a waiting land, across the kopjes and plains with stately sweep, assuaging with a generous hand the feverish thirst of grass and tree and parched earth—he, the Guest of the Evening, the First Rain of the Wet Season.

And then indeed is a wave of excitement; the very air seems teeming with anxious watchers consoled at last. The thirsty corn and thirsty grass strain upward, the leaves drink and drink till they droop of satiety, the flowers make brave endeavours to hold up their heads, that the very inmost corners of their dainty dwellings may be refreshed. The river swells and shouts for very gladness, and

the kopjes grow stately and calm again, while a glad song of plenty and thanksgiving rises from all the great heart of Mother Earth, to be echoed abroad on the lightning and on the thunder, and on the wings of the many winds.

Diary (*continued*)

September 28.—The last few days have dragged somewhat wearily, in spite of the cheer of The Neighbour's visit. It is extraordinary how days *can* drag in Rhodesia if they like. In the morning one is usually busy, for if there is nothing else to do one can always find dirty corners and kitchen utensils to point out to the boys, or a ragged garment to mend, or a dainty blouse that it is advisable to wash and iron oneself.

But in the afternoon—in the hot hours from two to five—when one is tired of the house, and tired of the boys, and tired of the ploughed land laid out before the verandah, and tired of a husband who is all you have had to speak to for a week, or perhaps three, Rhodesia laughs a little jeeringly, and says, "Go home again, you town girl, and buy things at something and elevenpence

three-farthings, and scramble for 'buses and bargains, and leave my wide spaces undisfigured by your gloomy face. Go home and be mediocre and surburban, and lose yourself once more in the crowd."

The Philosophers are kinder. This is what Marcus Aurelius says : "*Think not so much of what thou hast not, as of what thou hast; but of the things which thou hast select the best, and then reflect how eagerly they would have been sought if thou hadst them not.*"

That, of course, is really excellent advice, carefully followed out; and I proceeded to remember that, however tiresome and stupid black boys are as servants, they are not addicted to cook-housemaid-parlour-maid's knee, neither do they require an evening off once a week, neither do they look glum over irregular hours, or late nights, or several extra, unexpected guests. In fact, it became quite interesting to recount their many advantages, to balance against their somewhat considerable drawbacks.

In the matter of housing and feeding, for instance, they are positive treasures. They only have two meals a day, and both are timed

to suit the convenience of the household, and extraordinarily elastic. If there is not much work on hand, they have the first at 10 o'clock and the second about 8 o'clock in the evening. If it is washing-day, or visitors are expected to lunch, the first one slides to 2 o'clock, and the second any time after 7.30.

Then the preparation of it is simplicity personified. There is no paraphernalia whatever —not even so much as for the dogs, since they have plates. The house-boys require neither plates, knives, forks, spoons, nor table—much less table-cloths or chairs. All they do is to bring a large saucepan of water to the boil, and then stir into it a certain amount of mealie meal (or coarse flour made from Indian corn), which thickens at once into porridge. They then set the saucepan in the middle of the kitchen floor (which is usually an accommodating substance more or less formed of dirt) and seat themselves round it, either squatting like a tailor or poised on their heels. Each then takes a handful of mealie meal, pats and squeezes it into a filthy-looking lump, and sort of shoots it into his mouth at one fell swoop. This has

the advantage of keeping them quiet, at any rate for a few seconds, as even a black boy cannot talk with his mouth crammed full of mealie meal. At all other times they chatter very much like monkeys.

On the other hand, my kitchen being very small, and the hours of their repasts quite unascertainable, it is easy to enter hurriedly and unexpectedly, and flounder over the top of the nearest squatter almost into the saucepan itself. Of course another disadvantage is the condition of their hands, which they merely wipe on their garments, or, quite probably, on the kitchen cloths—without ever dreaming of soap and water. Northern boys wash regularly, but Mashonas only when the Missis puts on a face of unutterable disgust, and hands them a piece of soap, saying scathingly: "Too much stinkie."

At this time of the year it is too hot to get worked up to "unutterable disgust" more than once a week, so there is a great saving in soap. One feels more or less as limp as the candles, which hang down over the candlesticks,

bowing themselves to the ground like Joseph's brethren; or like the butter, which gives up trying to be butter, and dissolves into a yellowish fluid. What energy you may have is all used up in trying to keep the flies off your face; or walking the thirty yards to the shelter in the garden, where a hammock mercifully receives your failing limbs.

Nothing really keeps me alive except The Pal's assurance that it is of short duration. Directly the rains set in regularly, it grows delightfully cool again, he says; so each day one wonders if the rain will come—which is something fresh to do anyway. In fact, it is quite a feature of our lives now. In the morning we wonder if it will rain, and in the evening we wonder why it didn't; and in between we don't wonder at all, we just wait until it is time for the next remark, which simplifies existence amazingly.

But to go back to the house-boys, it really is a great saving to have servants who require no furniture. The kitchen, at present, does not boast either a chair or table, much less a sink or cupboard. But then why have a sink? It

is far simpler to have a mud floor, and pour the dregs on to it, or out of the window, or on the doorstep. A packing-case makes an excellent table, and the floor is a far better seat than a chair from a nigger's point of view, because when you go to sleep you don't fall off. And if you sit on the floor to peel the potatoes, you can just scatter the peelings all round, and leave them there until the piccanin has time to brush them on to the doorstep.

All refuse, as a rule, is brushed on to the doorstep. It would never occur to a Mashona to deposit it any farther; and if left to himself, he would presently have the house embedded in sweepings. The dust of the verandah they sweep on to the violet bed just below, and where there are no violets there is a species of wood pavement of burnt matches. A little while ago, in a burst of housewifely zeal, I carefully instructed the house-boy in the art of spreading tea-leaves over a floor or carpet before brushing it, and thus collecting the dust. After a week or so, I noticed the Lord and Master casting curious eyes occasionally over the garden. Evidently

some new aspect about it puzzled him. At last he commenced a close inspection. "I can't imagine what this odd substance spreading over the garden is," he said: "it looks like a brown insect, but it doesn't appear to be alive. It is simply smothering the violets."

I roused myself sufficiently to add my discerning powers to his, and studied more closely the odd substance. It was tea leaves. I suppose if I had remained inert, and Chip had overlooked the matter, we should presently have had to be dug out of them. It would be just like a Mashona to go on until he found himself imprisoned. They seem to have an amazing scarcity of reasoning powers, until a thing hits them in the face, so to speak. A boy with a fowl to sell, usually 1*s.* 6*d.*, will hear that twelve miles away he can get 2*s.* He will quite cheerfully tramp the twelve miles, sell his fowl, and tramp home again, having probably spent the extra 6*d.* on food for the journey.

If he can put a photograph or picture the wrong way up, he certainly will; and it is perhaps some criterion of my inert condition,

that I have calmly contemplated The Lord and Master standing on his head on my bric-à-brac table, and the family seat roof downwards, for quite a week. A Mashona will quite placidly put a sheet on the table, and a table-cloth on the bed; and when I once fetched out a specially charming bedspread, to delight the eye of the Resident Commissioner's wife, I ushered her into a room containing a bed with no counterpane whatever. Somewhat disturbed, I made a hurried investigation, and found my beautiful bedspread face downwards, next to the mattress.

But these after all are details, and I take the advice of Marcus Aurelius, and remember that if I were in Canada I should probably long for the presence even of a dirty Mashona to do the washing up. And if I were in England I should perhaps be worried out of my life by a cook who drank, or gave herself airs; or by no cook at all; and fretting and fuming in a stifling fog for a glimpse of the sun and a little warmth. I find a really steady endeavour enables one to grow in philosophy quite creditably. At first it worried me greatly

to observe that the sugar vanished as if it had wings, and the soap and butter and whisky in discreet, but noticeable quantities. I taxed first one boy and then another, but they only looked at me blankly and foolishly, in what was probably clever noncomprehension.

I consulted the Lord and Master and he said, "Lock everything up."

"What in?" I asked, and he grew silent.

Then I sought my friend Epictetus. "O Philosopher and friend," I adjured him, "behold thy disciple worn to a shadow, seeing the sugar and other such things vanish surreptitiously, and finding all reasoning of no avail." This is what he replied:

"*If you would advance in philosophy you must abandon such thoughts as, If I neglect my affairs I shall not have the means of living. If I do not correct my servant he will be good for nothing. For it is better to die of hunger, having lived without grief and fear, than to live with a troubled spirit amid abundance. And it is better to have a bad servant than an afflicted mind. Make a beginning then in small matters. Is a little of your oil spilt, or a little wine stolen?*

Then say to yourself, For so much peace is bought, this is the price of tranquillity. For nothing can be gained without paying for it."

So now I regard the sugar—which we buy by the sack—with a tranquil eye, and out of the monthly expenses I allow a certain sum for peace money. After all, it is Chip who pays, and I presume it is worth something to him to preserve the unwrinkled condition of the face of "the Light of his Eyes."

I am in two minds about passing the philosopher's advice on to our friend The Politician: only that a certain charm of incongruity, intensely Rhodesian, might be lost if I do so. As it is, this political genius, of high lineage and distinguished mien, occasionally leaves his breakfast table, or tea table, when we are visiting him, hunts for his keys, and goes away to his storecupboard to fill up the sugar bowl. When he returns he usually wears a slightly perturbed air, and declares the boys must be eating the sugar wholesale, for he only filled up the bowls a day or two ago. That, however, I think, is a Political Inexactitude, to excuse his forgetfulness; and anyhow,

I would not for something miss the novelty of that distinguished soldier and politician hurrying away into the store to fill up the sugar bowl, and returning with his own special perturbed expression. If he has been very much occupied the day you are invited to stay with him, it occasionally necessitates going into the drawing-room after your arrival, and asking him for a piece of soap; but in justice I must add, he manages his household so well that it would put many a housewife to the blush. He has been very kind in inviting Chip and myself to stay with him for occasional town gaieties—but then, most of the men in Rhodesia are kind, and probably there is a higher percentage of interesting men than in any other country in the world. For in a new country, if a man has aught of originality in him, he can get to the front and develop that originality far more easily than in a crowded land, where much of his time, and much of his newness, may be lost in the process of "pushing through."

September 29.—To-day has been a grey day, and I have discovered already that a grey day

in Rhodesia is a terrible infliction. Fortunately they are very unusual. A cloudy day, when the clouds blow aside occasionally and let the sun shine through, is a real boon, because it rests the eyes and gives new aspects to the landscape, without depressing. But a grey day wraps round the spirit like a pall. Everything seems to touch a dead level of monotony. The very kopjes themselves are monotonous grey hills, the ploughed land is grey, and the veldt is grey, and the flowers and the birds have a grey tinge. One wonders vaguely what one is alive for, and what is the use of going on being alive. I remembered the advice of Marcus Aurelius, but indeed I was hard put to it to think of something I possessed that I was specially glad about, and that I should eagerly desire if I had it not. Nothing very suitable seemed to suggest itself except my nose. Certainly I like my nose better than most people's, and when one thinks what sort of a nasal organ one might have been burdened with, I feel I certainly have good ground for self-congratulation. At the same time it is a somewhat useless pursuit,

to sit down in the wilderness and be glad that you have a well-shaped nose ; because after all, since you are in the wilderness, it might almost as well be the snout of a hippopotamus.

I wonder what The Writer-woman does on days like this. Plays about with her baby, I suppose, and writes thrilling romances ; though how she can in a country that sometimes makes your brain feel like an empty pea-pod, passes my comprehension. I suppose it is her gifted imagination. Chip took me down to see the orange and lemon blossom yesterday—trees and trees all white with blossom, scenting the very atmosphere. I imagine, if she had been there, she would have seen a bride and bridegroom in every bough, and whole courses of true love, and deep hate, running smoothly and otherwise. There would have been red-haired brides, and golden-haired brides, and black-haired brides ; and stalwart bridegrooms with dreamy blue eyes, and bold black ones, and sad grey ones. And they would all have had a distinguished air, because her heroes always do ; she literally peoples the whole hemisphere with distinguished

men and blue-eyed women, which would be ridiculous if it were not so interesting. Of course it must be very nice to have ready-made novels in your brain continually, without the bother of reading them, but I'm afraid I'm not built that way.

All my imagination could rise to, over the orange blossom, by way of description, was: "Snow that smells."

Of course it was very lovely snow, and a very delicious smell, but I had not much time to enjoy it, because a mad cow ran amok in our direction, and Chip literally threw me head-first into an orange bush. Orange bushes are not things that improve upon closer acquaintance, for as soon as they get you within reach they stab you all over with thorns about an inch long; and for the first few moments I thought I would rather have been left to the mad cow. I did not know cows went mad before. I don't think they do in England, or no doubt there would have been a muzzling order at some period. Chip said this was mad after looking at its brain when it was dead; but how he comes to know anything about

a cow's brain, when his previous farming experience consisted chiefly in growing mustard and cress in boxes in the back yard, is beyond my comprehension.

At the same time I must admit it is really extraordinary what he does know ; and in spite of the appalling garments he wears, I am far prouder of him than when he was lost in the black-coated crowd at home.

Still, he rather overreached himself the other day. He had his first woman patient come to be doctored, and her symptoms were exactly what The Neighbour had described to us. That is to say she stroked " Little Mary " with a circular motion, and said sorrowfully that Little Mary was very sick. Chip, full of importance, and immensely pleased with himself, got out his Cooper's Sheep Dip and his castor oil, and mixed her a small quantity as a remedy. The next we knew, the poor thing's husband came hurrying to tell us she was much worse. Chip went to see her at once, and being somewhat alarmed at her condition, sent a boy to The Neighbour with a note relating the whole circumstance.

The reply transfixed us.

"Good heavens!" she wrote, "you don't surely mean that you let her take it inwardly! If so, dose her at once with every particle of castor oil you can get. The Sheep Dip remedy is for *outward* application only."

Chip's face was a study, but he went off to the sick woman instantly himself, and returned presently with the reassuring news that she was nearly quite well again, and had asked for some more. He said she called him something which meant "Heaven-born," and "Light of the Earth," and from the pensive expression of his face later, I judged he was weighing the advantages of coming forward as a Messiah, or Prophet, or something of that kind.

I think it was the pudding we had for dinner that finally dispelled his visionary dreams. I told the boy to make a boiled pudding, with currants in, and asked him if he knew how. He assured me that he had made many plum-puddings, and perfectly understood. I took his word for it. What he achieved was the kind of boiled pudding which usually has

apples or plums or any fresh fruits inside, only our pudding was crammed full of ordinary currants, which sprawled out all over the dish like squashed flies, when it was opened.

After that we sat on the verandah, and contemplated the night. I have seen nothing in my life like a moonlight night in Rhodesia. In this clear atmosphere the very ground seems to reflect the moonlight, and the stars shine brilliantly with it, and the leaves of the bananas shake it all round them. It is a silver world of surpassing loveliness, which one sits and absorbs in a dreaming content.

In the distance is the weird sound of tom-toms, where the boys in the compound sit round their fires and make what, to them, is music. It is in reality a hideous, droning sound, but it suits the country in some fanciful way, and is not irritating, as it would be anywhere else.

It is curious how the boys become specially musical whenever the moon is full, beating their tom-toms louder and louder as the moon grows fuller.

At other times they spend the evening sneezing. I do not know why they do this, but one of their chief delights, sitting round a fire, is to take very strong snuff, which they make themselves, and then awake the echoes of the night by a succession of stentorian sneezes. When they are tired of this they go to bed in their huts, which consists in about ten boys lying down, rolled up in blankets, with their feet towards a good fire piled up in the centre. Occasionally a foot comes in contact with a hot cinder, but the boy, as far as I can ascertain, merely wonders if it is a mosquito, and goes on sleeping.

In the morning they are awakened by a gong sounded loudly at sunrise, and they crawl out, wrapped in their blankets, and go to work without having any food. If it is cold they are almost useless; but if it is warm they knuckle to right away, apparently without any hunger pangs until twelve o'clock, when they leave off for an hour and a half.

After that they go on again until sunset.

But it is not many of them that work well. The majority are incorrigibly lazy, and only work when an overseer is present. But whether working or not, they chatter the whole time, like a crowd of monkeys. I asked The Pal what they talked about, and he told me their favourite topic was the white man and all he does. They discuss his clothes, his habits, his machinery, and his occupations. At other times they talk about the records of their own tribe or some other tribe, or they discuss the varying prices of wives in different districts, or they pour scorn and vituperation on some old-time black conquerors.

Their interest in the white man's machinery is very great. The Pal told me he once asked a boy why they did not make machines for themselves, and he said they would when they knew where to find the bolts ; implying that they thought the white man procured all the separate parts easily, but had to search in some mysterious fashion for the bolts to put them together. Although a Mashona boy can drive a machine all right, they are dreadfully

careless at breaking them for want of a little thought, and give the white man many weary hours of work at repairs. Of course he can send his machine to town to be repaired, but much time is lost and much money expended; and it is a great boon to him to be able to do his repairs himself. Although the Mashonas are so tiresome, they usually get 10*s.* a month wages; whereas the Nyassaland boys, who are so clever, usually get only 5*s.* But here and there there are clever Mashonas also, and they are particularly good at driving and at breaking in oxen.

Taking the native in the aggregate, he appears to be a remarkable creature—capable of such heights and such depths. I heard of a white man who had a very successful gold mine about eighty miles from a town. He fell ill with fever, and had to go to hospital, leaving his black servant in charge. While he was absent, another white man tried to tamper with his pegs and steal some of his property. The native servant discovered the trickery, and took the first train he could get to the town, making straight for his master in the hospital. The

sick man got a white friend to go out at once, and it was proved that the boy's fears had been well founded. More than one white man owes his life to his black servant's devotion and courage, and some have been served faithfully by the same boys for perhaps fifteen years.

But I do not think, throughout the length and breadth of Rhodesia, Nyassaland, and East Africa, a single white man could be found who believed in native franchise; or who believes that the native will be ready for it for a long time to come. Their chief wish at present seems to be: "Preserve us from ever having natives anything like the natives of Cape Colony, under any circumstances."

This is because in Cape Colony a native will jostle a white woman off the pavement with impunity; and it is not unusual for black boys to fill the seats of a tramcar while white women stand. And in return they show very little of the loyalty of the raw nigger, and are far more dangerous in every way. The northern nigger would never dream of passing a white person with a hat on his head, or of

speaking to a white person with his hat on, and he would always stand up if a white person were present. What is more, far from resenting it in any way, they have proved themselves infinitely more tractable and useful, and seem happier all round. Civilisation in its advanced state spoils the nigger. In its early stages it finds him a very likable, interesting, and useful being. At the same time a little more attention than he gets in most districts would not hurt him, and it is open to question whether all is done that might and should be, in our northern territories.

I have derived most of this native lore from The Pal, who has a remarkably shrewd brain behind the twinkle that so irresistibly dwells in his eyes. Like The Neighbour's husband, he also can do almost anything with black boys, but his method is a different one, and emanates from his own personality. Instead of scolding a boy, he jeers at him good-humouredly, and makes him laugh as well as feel ashamed, and his own particular set of natives love him. They love a little humour beyond anything, and are always quickly drawn to any one who

makes them laugh. In one of his gay moods Chip once smacked a boy in fun, and the boy went off and told all the other boys, and was delighted beyond words.

Once, when a boy cut his finger rather badly, Chip sent him to me for a piece of rag. Without giving much thought to it, I wound the rag round the hurt finger and tied it up. We discovered later that he went round telling every boy in the place that The Missis had tied up his finger for him, and in the next week or so I had so many boys come up to the house and ask for a piece of rag for a hurt finger, that I had to firmly refuse to doctor any more. In return, according to their capabilities, they are good to me. If I am lying down with a sick headache, they will speak in whispers until I am about again ; and I had one boy who once saw me get myself a cup of hot milk at 11 o'clock, and every day afterwards prepared it for me himself without being asked. Unfortunately he turned out to be the biggest scoundrel we had ever employed ; but I suppose if he was clever enough to divine a white woman's tastes, he

was naturally clever enough to be a pretty first-class villain. One of his accomplishments was to use very bad language, and he always ruined any other boy who worked with him.

A very stupid boy will often end by making a good servant, because, his head being entirely empty of ideas, becomes imbued with those you put into it, and he will therefore, with parrot-like rigidity, perform regularly whatever you have taught him.

As far as I can ascertain, white servants are scarcely ever a success in an outside district, as the loneliness is too much for them, and they become more of a burden than a help. Which is unfortunate, as farm life in Rhodesia would be so much easier for the wives, if more often there was another white woman at hand. The Neighbour has a great scheme by which she wants to bring white women out in shiploads, mostly chosen from the average well-educated "good sort" English girl, of whom there are such a superfluous number at home.

"If we could only get them here," is her plaint, "and marry off all the lonely men to them, and

give them useful, busy, happy lives in place of the narrowness and emptiness of their English conditions, just think what it would mean to the country!

"I would head a deputation to London Wall Buildings to insist upon the Hostel charges being lowered, and then the land might be flooded with babies, and lusty young Rhodesians growing up in all directions. Personally I think the Hostel ought to be free to every genuine colonist's wife; and the Company bear the expense; for the poor woman has quite enough to win through on her lonely farm or mine, without being worried out of her life to know where the money is to come from to pay the bill, which, including the doctor, is almost prohibitive."

The Neighbour is nothing if not thorough. There would be a revolution in a week if she held the reins of government. She finished her dissertation by announcing: "I should like to halve all the high salaries among the officials, and devote the proceeds to encouraging the birth-rate of the white population."

She said it all before Chip, and then cast a glance at him that made him blush, much to my amusement, and I wondered if she was going to offer him a little sound advice. To cover his embarrassment I asked her lightly why she didn't set a good example and lead off with a round half-dozen.

"Oh, I mean to," was her laughing reply, "and bring them all up on mealie meal and monkey nuts!"

October 3.—The Gentleman Farmer came to lunch to-day, and The Neighbour turned up unexpectedly. Those two holding forth on Rhodesia is a thing to hear. The Writer-woman's latest violent scheme is a Sanatorium, in the healthiest spot procurable within a radius of twelve miles of the town. It is to be very pretty, very cheap, and have various attractions like tennis and golf; and it is chiefly for the sake of the women. The idea seems to be that many women get ill for want of a little change of air and a rest from household worries, because there is nowhere at hand to go to; and her scheme makes an elysium for them, attractive enough to lure their "lords and

masters" to ride or bicycle out to them for the week-ends. She says, at present, it is difficult to get a change of air and scene without going to the coast; and that costs more than many women can afford. The Gentleman Farmer's latest scheme seems to have more to do with co-operation. He wants to benefit the farmers, and she wants to benefit the women, which is very nice of them both; but personally I would rather benefit all the homesick people of either sex by halving the cost of the trip home.

When they were wearied of their schemes, they discussed shooting. The Gentleman Farmer had recently got a "right and left" bush-buck, which means he shot two bush-buck together, one with the right barrel and one with the left, and really is a very uncommon feat. The Neighbour's husband had just got a cheetah, not very far from their house. It sounds as if wild beasts and things abounded, but this is not the case by any means, what few there are being very rarely seen.

They next had a great argument as to how much a man could start farming on in Rhodesia, and came to the conclusion he could scarcely start at all without £800 and even then he could get practically no return the first year. They also argued concerning the proper time to plough, and the proper time to plant mealies; and I am bound to say I thought the Writer-woman's arguments for ploughing early were the most convincing. They discussed sheep dips and cattle dips, and what breed of bull best suited the country, both, for once, agreeing, and naming their favourite—the Black Polled Angus. Why lucerne could not be grown successfully was another subject; and I gathered the ground was either too rich or too poor for it, but I don't know which. The best soil for potatoes occupied them about ten minutes, and they both had a good deal to say in favour of ground nuts and beans.

The Writer-woman was somewhat scathing about a great scheme of the Company's to export hay, because it seems a good deal of the hay is poisonous, and it is very difficult

to discern the safe quality. The Gentleman Farmer capped this by soreness concerning some mealie buying of the Company's in Bechuanaland, which seems to have much annoyed the colonists. But though they both aimed a good many random shafts at the august circle who direct our welfare from London Wall Buildings, I came to the conclusion they were both at heart quite in favour of their temporal rulers, and had no desire to change them.

Most of the time Chip listened with deep interest, and looked as if he was learning things. I tried to look intelligent, and do likewise, but I couldn't help wondering if the Writer-woman ever had moods when she felt she never wanted to hear a potato named again; and when she wished an earthquake would swallow up all the mealies and everything pertaining thereto; and when she longed to go to a world where she would never see hateful little pigs, and foolish little calves, and lanky-legged lambs any more. Of course, one only has such moods intermittently—at heart I am developing into such a first-class farmer's

wife, that I foresee I shall shortly be able to argue even on the merits of Black Polled Angus bulls and Buff Orpington cocks, with views on ploughing and monkey-nuts thrown in ; but it is a happy state of intelligence not reached at a bound, and just at present I feel I could shine better in a dissertation on Swinburne, or Carlyle, or the ancient philosophers.

But it will not, of course, continue to be so, because my friend Epictetus has impressed upon me very forcibly this maxim : "*That man is wise among us, and hath understanding of things divine, who hath nobly agreed with necessity.*" In consequence, it follows that I must no longer philander with the poets (not even Swinburne and Omar), nor see visions of elegant creations from Worth, nor remember the delights of Ranelagh and Hurlingham and Boulter's Lock, nor dally cheerfully with the newest novels ; but nobly perceive instead the rival advantages of lucerne and green barley ; of ploughing early or ploughing late ; of Minorcas and Buff Orps ; of Black Polled Angus and Devon Shorthorn

bulls ; of the Syracuse plough or Ransome's Three-Disc. To carry my philosophy further, no doubt it will prove far pleasanter than learning the intricacies of type-writing, or nursery-governessing, or post-office clerking, which might have been my lot unhusbanded. As the Writer-woman manages to write novels as well as know all these agricultural things, it evidently does not turn one's brain into a green vegetable product ; so perhaps I shall strike out into some unusual line likewise, and eventually arrive back in England with my troupe of performing lions, or performing hens.

Or I might write a philosophical treatise expressly for the use of Colonial farmers' wives, beginning with the maxim, "That woman is wise, and hath nobly agreed with necessity, who hath attained knowledge of things agricultural."

Or, "Be not persuaded that the potato is commonplace, but be rather persuaded that without it thou wert in a sorry plight."

Or, "Bethink thee, if thou art wearied with the monotony of ploughed land, that at

least it is not traversed by motor 'buses which seek to overpower thee, nor by taxis which seek to run thee down; and when thou wouldst meekly cross the road, thou are not called upon to do so at peril of thy life."

Jill's Rhodesian Philosophy

THE DAM FARM,
October 6.

MY DEAR JACK,

When I received your letter, I found it so difficult to rejoice appropriately on a Rhodesian farm, that I nearly burst. A bottle of champagne was out of the question; likewise bell-ringing, or flag-flying, or dispatching telegrams.

I waltzed round the room with each dog in turn, which they disliked excessively; and kissed my new pony on the nose, which he disliked still more. Then I ate up all the chocolates I possessed. Finally, feeling still like to burst with excitement, I climbed to the top of the nearest tall kopje, and shouted to the winds of heaven that the little old brotherkin had come into his inheritance of great joy. Of course if you love her better than me, I shall kill her, in cold blood, the first time I see her; but if you love us both equally,

only in a different way, I shall allow it to pass. You do not say what she is like, but I know she is nice by the message she sends to me; and when you bring her to see us, you shall have our best hut specially cleaned out, and a piece of glass put into the window-frame. I do not know whether sisters of generals may be offered a hut to sleep in; but if not, she shall have Chip's quarters, and Chip can hang himself on the verandah—I mean of course in a hammock.

Long before I was half-way through your letter, I knew that it was the general's wife's sister; and I may say that I rejoiced exceedingly it was not the general's wife herself, which would certainly have been the case had you been a very fashionable young man. Now you can have your old friend for a sister-in-law, and I think you have managed very cleverly. If you are not married until next summer in England, I may get home to bestow upon you the light of my presence and the contents of my purse. The latter is not so generous an offer as might appear, owing to the fact that a Rhodesian farm starts off by swallowing

every coin it can wring from you, and only returning you promises payable at some uncertain date.

Still, I can bring you articles which no one in England can procure; though whether you could bear to live in the same house with them I am not prepared to state.

If you have time to be interested in anything apart from your own joyful condition, take notice that my Lord and Master has presented me with the darlingest pony that ever turned up his dear nose in disgust when kissed. The dogs are a little jealous because he is invited into the dining-room; but they must get used to it. Also I can now ride astride at full gallop.

I have further a baby buck, which was picked up in some long grass by one of the boys. You remember Babs—the dear dead Soldier-man's setter?—she had two puppies a week ago, which both died, and now she is suckling the baby buck. It is the prettiest sight imaginable. The baby buck likes to move around in little bounds; and my sweet Babs follows her sedately, with an anxious, inquiring air. She

allows none of the other dogs to come near, and is very proud of her adopted child. I hope the little buck will live under such promising conditions. It is very rarely any one succeeds in rearing one; but when once reared they are extraordinarily docile and affectionate.

I inclose what The Writer-woman calls a scrawl. She sent it to me the other day. It will tell you something about Rhodesia that I could not—please keep it for me.

Dear brotherkin, in my heart I hug you—and in all my being I rejoice.

JILL.

Enclosure.

RHODESIA'S WONDER MONTH.

No one knows when the wonder month begins. It is almost as mysterious as the hoar-frost in its coming. At night there are bare, gaunt trees, stretching out skeleton branches to a desolate, winter-bound land; in the morning there is a veritable fairyland of frost, and sparkle, and loveliness.

So, in Rhodesia, one week there is a dry, burnt-up veldt, withered, hopeless-looking trees, a uniform colourlessness everywhere; and the next there is a wonder of unspeakable loveliness: the wilderness, in very truth, blossoms as the rose.

It is almost impossible to describe beauties of Rhodesia's wonder month in the spring of the Rhodesian year. When the trees in England are turning to reds and browns in rich-tinted autumn, the trees with us burst into no less rich and beautiful colouring in the Rhodesian spring.

The word goes forth, the magician waves his wand, and the transformation scene takes place.

Among the first heralds of summer are the pale heliotrope bell clusters, which burst out mysteriously from black, leafless stumps. One day a kopje side is barren with a covering of dry leaves and sticks, from which shoot up dead-looking black stumps; and the next these beautiful clusters have decked it in indescribable beauty. Then there are the blue, sweet-scented water-lilies, the pale, yellow arums, the masses

of blossom on the violet tree, and the ghostly, gleaming, white Bella Donna lilies.

Yet perhaps the loveliest of all is the veldt itself, with its carpet of rich terra-cotta red earth, studded over with delicate flowers of exquisite colouring. There are clusters of blue blossoms like large forget-me-nots, masses of yellow flowers, pink sweet peas growing low on the ground, scarlet gladiolas, veldt primroses, and many other dainty delights in wild profusion.

Away in the distance are the mystical blue kopjes ; and overhead the first intensely blue rain-washed sky. Nearer at hand the kopjes are gorgeous with the scarlet and gold and bronze of the new leaves—causing a sense of gala festivity to imbue the very air.

After the long drought of winter the first cooling rains come as a heaven-sent blessing, and one feels oneself reviving and becoming renewed, even as the flower-strewn earth. All things raise their heads, and hold out their hands for the cooling showers. The flowers drink until their delicate blossoms are satiated with the delicious nectar. The little leaves

clap their glistening hands with delight, and the streams begin to sing their summer Te Deum. The birds twitter over their nesting. The rich smell of the bountiful earth steals to the nostrils, and almost hour by hour one can watch the quickening footsteps of summer.

The tiny blades of grass play pranks on your watching eyes. You wait to see them swell, and they are motionless. You glance away at some other beauty of the wonder month, and lo! when you look again the tiny blades have lengthened, and they are all laughing up their sleeves. It is the same with the little leaves. They are all playing merry pranks with the humans out of sheer joyousness. It is as if the very earth were given over to merriment, making the most of its youthful playtime. All too soon the sun will blister and burn in spite of the rain, and the moist heat bring forth much that is cruel and foul; but there is this little space between—this one dear wonder-time of growing, and singing, and loving.

And it is not only the earth that has its springtime. When the first rains come in

Rhodesia there is a springtime in the heavens at the sunset hour—a springtime marked by a very riot of colour and splendour. The big, low-hanging clouds catch the colour rays as they pass, and concentrate them into banks of crimson glory. Behind the cloud masses are wide infinities of tranquil light, painted as only the hand of a God can paint. Palest yellows blend with palest greens, and porcelain-like heliotrope fades into a pink flush upon gleaming white. It matters little that one is hidden from the sunset scene, for all its wondrous colours are reflected through the translucent air upon the clouds, and upon the far, measureless pastures of silence. There comes a moment when the hushed earth takes her part in the pageant; and then the ploughed land, and the tree-decked kopjes, and the flower-strewn veldt reflect the crimson glow in a tender rose flush that settles down over the world as it might be an angel's wing. And all the time the sky is changing. It is as though the Master Hand were ringing in scene after scene of some wondrous Pageant of the Universe.

Strange to think of the long, long centuries in which the Pageant has unfolded itself even thus to the lifeless kopjes and vleis, unheeded and unappreciated by human eyes. Are those same humans perhaps of but little moment to the Powers of the Atmosphere ?—their appreciation, their rapture, their wonder a thing scarce worth taking note of? Are there spirits in the wide spaces, for which the splendour is outspread, independent of the little creatures called men ? Or, as in the great day of the creation, is it sufficient that the Creator of all looks around and sees that it is good ?

The dreamer watches the changing lights through wistful eyes, conscious more than usual of his limitations, weighed down by the vastness of his inexpressible longing, and the seeming smallness of his human lot.

Only perhaps the very wonder has a message for him : a message of perfection and fulfilment that reign in other spheres, where other work, other learning, other loving await him.

DIARY (*continued*).

January 1.—Christmas in Rhodesia is an uncanny thing. Strawberries and roses are at their best, and the temperature is about 90° in the shade.

There was a huge Christmas-tree for the children (such a lot of children—nearly three hundred : I'm sure the Writer-woman needn't worry about the population much, because we only number some fifteen hundred whites in the town). Chip and I went to town to see it, to try and feel Christmasy. A heroic soldier-man dressed up in white cotton-wool as Father Christmas—think of it ! with the temperature at 90° in the shade—and the children were all delighted.

We didn't do much at the farm on Christmas Day. The Pal came over early, and we invited one or two other lonely men in the neighbourhood ; and we wished each

other a Happy Christmas, and tried to over-eat ourselves in the approved style, but it was too hot even for that.

The Pal was a little peevish. He said he didn't like Christmas at the best of times, and he'd far rather be carrying forage than celebrating it. Chip presented him with a tin of cigarettes ; and I made him a charming tobacco-bag, out of the tops of old suède evening gloves, worked with his initial. He said it was beautiful, but I noticed he cast a loving eye at the filthy little calico one he wears always tucked in his belt. I made one for Chip also, but he made no bones about his feelings on the subject. "It's too good to use every day," he said, "so I'll keep it for best" ; and he forthwith refilled his little calico grub, and put the new one away.

Why does a nice man almost always love his old, dirty, worn-out possessions ? Chip has things that I don't believe a nigger would thank him for, and he loves them dearly. The Pal is just as bad. If he has a new article of apparel stolen, he is merely philosophical about it ; but if it is an old

rag he talks as if he had lost his heart's delight.

I invited him to bring the new "eldest kitten" over for Christmas, but he couldn't because he had lost or mislaid the only old coat containing a big enough pocket in it; and even for a favourite kitten he would not wear a new one. I was rather glad, because old garments suit his twinkle the best.

We were rather amused to find that the natives all knew it was Christmas. Not only our own boys employed on the farm asked for Christmas-boxes, but natives from various kraals strolled casually up, and impudently suggested they should have one too. The Lord and Master drove them off, breathing out threatenings and slaughter, but to all our own boys he presented a tin of bully-beef and a tin of dried fish, which delighted them beyond measure. The house-boys had a shirt each as well, so they will be quite presentable for a little while. I made the other two bachelors a dozen mince pies each, which they accepted very joyfully; and we drank to

absent friends, and all that sort of thing, but without much spirit. It would have been all right, perhaps, if The Pal hadn't been peevish ; but he was in the mood when he seemed much too glad most of his friends were absent, to want to drink to them, and to feel a kind of personal affront in the season. Also three different people had sent him Punch's Almanac ; and he seemed to have it rather on his mind whether he ought to read it through three times.

The next day everything went on as usual, as we do not recognise holidays out on the farms.

January 28.—Four whole weeks since I last wrote in my diary. Laziness, I suppose, and lack of incident. Not that there is less now than usual. As a matter of fact there is more, because it sometimes rains.

I have discovered that I like the wet season for that reason. It adds a new interest to each day to see if it will rain or not ; and when there is a terrific downpour on the next farm, you can wonder for quite a long

time if it is coming here or going to pass us by. There is one thing, it very seldom rains all day. Sometimes for a week it will rain each night and be fine all day, which is delightful. All the same, this January has been very remarkable for its rainfall: the gauge registering fourteen inches in seventeen days, which I believe is a startling enough registration, even for Rhodesia. On the whole it has been a very trying month. A month of heavy roads, in which the waggon taking the forage to town gets stuck, or cannot go at all, or goes and cannot get back; of tiresome, difficult drifts; of impassable swamps, which render the short cuts useless; of dragging a heavy mackintosh about, probably to get drenched through in spite of it; of wet wood for the fire, and a general discovery of unsuspected leaks in the roof; of thunder headaches and lightning scares; of blind flies that torment horses and mules; of fleas that torment indiscriminately; of house-flies whose name is legion, especially at meal-times; of mosquitoes who parade gaily each night. A month in which the milk goes sour, and the meat goes

sour ; and nothing but a book of philosophy prevents faces going sour likewise.

That it does do so, is another signal victory for my theory ; for a book of cookery could not spread its advantages over the whole day, whereas the philosophy book embraces the entire twenty-four hours. It has, for instance, pointed out to me most beneficially, that, on the other hand, January is a green month, and a flower-laden month, and a month of wonderful skies : between the storms, when the sun is shining, incomparably lovelier than the dry season of dust, and smoky skies, and dry, parched veldt.

It demands its penances, that is all. Philosophy will teach you, when things are specially unpleasant, that you are merely buying joy. It is an invigorating thought. What a jolly world, if every one, when things went wrong, instead of wringing their hands and wearing faces as long as a wet week, sat down and remembered all the ripping times in store for them, for which they were now paying the cost. Surely, that is a philosophical conclusion, to be recommended to the home folks just as

much as the colonial ones. But one hasn't very much time for that sort of contemplation in England. It is only when one is deprived of many of the little things that fill up an ordinary day, one can fit in intervals to sit and think.

A circumstance that I find almost beyond my friends the philosophers, however, is the fact that my cook-boy insisted that he must go home and plant his lands. I suggested that Mrs. Shilling did the planting—the wives usually do most of the work—but it seems Mrs. Shilling is rather busy just now in her own special domain of child-bearing, and unless Shilling planted his own land, it probably would not get planted at all. Finally I watched him depart with sorrowful eyes, and then turned to contemplate the little bit of black flesh who was all I had left to help the house-boy. The cook-boy will come back in about a month, but, O Epictetus! O Marcus Aurelius! what shall I do meanwhile, with only that little demonlike bit of black flesh for a cook-boy? Think, I suppose, how much worse it would be if I had not even that much of nigger

in my kitchen, and had to wash the saucepans and dirty plates myself. We had a raw boy up from the lands to help one day, but he merely remained in a state of more or less imbecile astonishment, until the odour of him permeated to the drawing-room, and I had to request him to return to his ordinary occupation.

Another grievous trial, through which I trust blindly that I am laying up for myself a crown of joy, is the ants. Throughout the house there is only one spot immune from them, and that is the larder table, which stands in tins of water and paraffin. Anything rashly put down anywhere else is black with ants in no time. And this is not counting the white ants. They, if you neglect them, will eat you not only out of house and home, but out of clothing as well. As for the maggots, I have seen meat and birds absolutely alive with them within two days of killing.

Another drawback is that the washing never gets dry. It just goes on, like Tennyson's brook, until it has the luck to get safely indoors without its fifth or sixth drenching.

This would not matter so much if one's Lord and Master possessed an ample wardrobe. As it is, he comes in wet through for the third time, and calls for some trousers that went to the wash last week, every other available pair having been used up; and last week's trousers answer back, "Alas! we are still wetter than those you have taken off." This has the gruesome result of the Lord and Master prowling round the house in a loin-cloth, searching for the garments of decency.

Another trying result is that we have only a ditch instead of a path leading up to our front door, and if you chance to be out after dark, and miss the edge, whether you are led by the blind or not, you fall into the ditch.

No, fourteen inches of rain in seventeen days is no joke. It is more in the nature of a revolution—by which I mean a general rooting up and tearing down—a simile that I consider very clever for me to have thought out all alone.

January has, indeed, been a wild, uncivilised month, as far as storms are concerned, finishing off two nights ago with, what I am sure the

Writer-woman would call, a bacchanalian revel of the elements.

In that one night, between 12 p.m. and 7 a.m. 3·79 inches fell on our farm, and higher up the valley, whence the flood came, they say about six inches must have fallen. We did not know anything about the flood till morning. In the night, the revel only suggested the elements in a condition of merry-making, akin to "drunk and disorderly," and, as is usually the case, it was not until the morning any one realised what the fun had cost. In the night while the rain lashed and tore and foamed, terrific peals of thunder chased each other riotously round the heavens, while across the firmament, from horizon to horizon, brilliant, magnificent forks of lightning danced from kopje to kopje in hilarious glee, illuminating with a light stronger than daylight, rain-soaked valleys, and storm-lashed hills. (N.B. That paragraph is entirely my own ; not the Writer-woman's.)

I, with my newly developed sensation-hunger, enjoyed it immensely. I sat on the edge of my bed, and the more brilliant the

lightning, the more deafening the thunder, the more rapturously my heart delighted in it.

But the next morning came the time of reckoning.

The merry-makers had gone blissfully on their way then, leaving a heartless track of devastation for the hard-working human. Our river, which we can jump in many places, was a torrent twenty yards broad, and on its extended bosom it bore triumphantly, mealies, pumpkins, rappoka, potatoes, lucerne, vegetables, and seedlings; to say nothing of rich soil carried with much labour to some particular acre, which it apparently took a fiendish delight in removing to the farthest possible point.

Most disastrous of all, it very nearly washed away the dam. *My* dam, which I rely on to express my feelings when they pass breaking-point, and which has given so unique and suitable a name to my far home.

But The Pal, whose farm lies lower than ours, suffered even more seriously. When the torrent tore down to him, it was already weighted with tons of produce, which caused

it to spread its waters farther afield, and gather to its bosom still more produce, doing in all about £65 worth of damage. Moreover he was practically isolated for nearly two days, having to communicate with us by folding a letter in a handkerchief, and tying it to a stone, and so throwing it across the torrent.

But he still smiled. "I've got a splendid idea," he said, the first time we saw him. "I'm not going to farm any more. I'm going to fix nets across the river to catch all the stuff that washes down. If I put them low enough I shall catch most of my own stuff, and a lot of yours as well."

"I hear there was a nigger washed down," I commented, "so you might get some stock."

"Yes," he said : "beastly nuisance ! I'm sure he's in the reeds somewhere near the spot my drinking-water comes from." His twinkle suddenly deepened. "I hope S—— hooks him the next time he comes out to fish ; he'd just about fall into the river with fright . . . and I should have to get my drinking-water somewhere else."

Later he told us that what few mealies he had left standing were being trampled down by wild pig, and he proposed a moonlight expedition for the three of us.

"I know they are direct descendants of the devil-possessed," was his moan, "for they don't take what they want and go away, they stop and trample quantities down just for the fun of it."

We told him we would come and help, and sent him away comforted, though still a little worried as to whether the drowned nigger was above or below the spot his drinking-water came from.

As he was leaving, he asked me if I had no philosophical maxim for him to carry away; but I probed my mind vainly for a wise saying to bear on the point, and finally, not to be dumb, made the asinine reflection: "A nigger in hand is worth two in the reeds."

February 14.—I find it is customary for farmers to keep a boy armed with a gun watching all night for wild pig, and just occasionally, by a fluke, he hits one. After this

there is great rejoicing in nigger huts, and a processional carrying home of the sportsman and his bag. Unless, possibly, the scarer of pigs from the next farm gets wind of the bag in time to rush off post-haste and declare that he shot it first, and it got away. Then there is much "indaba" of a very forcible nature, and Solomon has to come to judgment. When the dispute is settled, the monster is cut up, and if he is young and tender the white man takes all the best parts, and the native carries off every atom that is left.

This year the pigs are in greater numbers and more destructive than they have been known to be for a long time, so The Pal urged a speedy fulfilment of our promise to join him in an expedition. Finally we started off about 8.30 one evening, each carrying a gun, and accompanied by three dogs. I do not quite know why I was given a gun, but possibly it was for the look of it. They both knew perfectly well I could not shoot, and should probably have been much safer with a walking-stick.

As we strode stealthily along, the moon

was just climbing over the top of the kopjes, turning a black world to a silver one, with fascinating lights and darks and shadows. It was a world to hear fairy-bells in, and imagine troops of little fairy creatures dancing in each open space. And instead, we stood and listened every now and then for the snap of breaking stalks, or crunching cobs, or sniffed the air with our noses pointing upwards, for the unmistakable odour of *pigs*. Before we started I was as keen on the expedition as either. Now I wished they would both go away after their pigs alone, and leave me with my fairies. But the mood soon passed in the fascination of the hunt. As we pressed forward we spoke in whispers, adding an air of mystery to our movements. It was not really necessary, because the pigs as a rule make too great a noise to hear anything ; but it certainly added a delicious weirdness to the expedition, as we dived into the green sea of mealies—in many places ten to twelve feet high—and saw the moonlit, star-spangled heavens through the broad, glistening leaves above us.

Then, stooping, creeping, gliding—eyes, ears, and noses alert, a keen sense of adventure mingled with the sportsman's subdued excitement whenever he is tracking down with his gun—we ranged stealthily through the sheeny green sea.

Broad wet leaves slapped our faces in a friendly way, and emptied their dewy contents down our necks and into our boots. Sometimes they seemed to clasp us rapturously, at others to give us a hastening pat. As I could not have fairies, it pleased my fantastical imagination to fancy them alive. Poor mealies, growing tall and strong so bravely, and this dastardly enemy ravaging their kingdom.

"Oh, be quick! be quick!" they all cried to us, in hushed, frightened whispers, wringing their hands and rocking themselves slowly in anxious dread.

"Yes, yes, it's all right, we'll protect you!" I answered; and then they gave us those affectionate slaps, and anointed us with heaven's own dew.

On and on we pressed, coming often to

open patches where had been a dreadful carnage, and gallant mealie stalks lay prone in the moonlight like slain warriors, with their fruitful cobs scattered right and left. Sometimes we crept along the edge of a ditch, sometimes plunged through dew-soaked grass nearly to our waists—always alert, always ready—with the tall kopjes sentinel all round.

And then at last came the tell-tale sound of snapping stalks, interpersed with little grunts, for which our ears were straining—and the dogs' tails wagged furiously as they found the scent. The Lord and Master, with me at a discreet distance behind, made a half-circle in one direction, while The Pal made a half-circle in the other, so that they came upon the herd from two different points. In this manner we suddenly approached about fifteen pigs of varying sizes, feeding, ravaging, destroying.

But already they had scented us, possibly they have little friendly devil-scouts, and in a twinkling they were off helter-skelter, making a bee-line for the nearest kopje. Bang! bang! Both Chip and The Pal fired instantly, and

then sprang forward followed by madly excited dogs. At the same moment an unsuspected, frenzied trampling close beside me drove my pulses up to fever pitch, as a big black object loomed suddenly on my right. I am not very clear what happened next. By instinct I raised my gun. By instinct I pulled both triggers at once, and then I turned a sort of somersault backwards, and lay as still as the dead pig. Had I been consulted at the moment I should have declared we were both dead. As it was, I revived to the unedifying spectacle of Chip and The Pal speechless with uncontrollable mirth. Gasping hysterically, The Pal tried to hoist me to my feet, but Chip just sat down and leaned his head on his knees and shook with laughter.

"I don't know what you are so amused about," I said, rubbing tenderly my bruised shoulder; "there's only one dead beast, and neither of you sportsmen shot him."

"We're only rejoicing that the gun did not happen to be pointing our way," was Chip's ridiculous comment.

"And that you had something soft to fall on," added The Pal.

"How could the gun be pointing your way," I snorted, "when the pig was in the opposite direction?"

"We only thought the pig got in the way by accident," said Chip, and was quite unnecessarily seized with a fresh paroxysm.

"You're quite sure the gun didn't go off over your head as you fell backwards?" suggested The Pal.

"But why should I fall backwards?" said I.

"Oh! just astonishment," said he.

"The astonishment must be chiefly yours," I told him scathingly. "When I aim, I hit. When you aim! . . . well, I should think the pigs up in the kopje are as amused as you are." Then a sudden weakness seized me. "Does it always hurt your shoulder?" I asked plaintively.

That started them off again, and Chip remarked enigmatically, "It's a brute to kick." I glanced at the dead pig. "Oh, not the pig," he said—"the gun."

We wended our way homewards after that,

The Pal returning to our place for the night; and I tramped through the tall mealies, forgetting my bruised shoulder in elation at the thought that I was indeed their Protector. Neither of the sportsmen seemed inclined to allow that I *had* shot the pig; each insisting that he had hit it in a vital spot before it reached me, and that I had fired my gun merely in a stress of surprise and agitation.

"As you've got a bruised shoulder for nothing," The Pal said sympathetically, while we enjoyed hot cocoa and cakes, "you'll have to fall back on your friends the philosophers for comfort."

"I am sure they will be equal to the occasion," I retorted, and picked up the book, opening it at random. "They are indeed," I cried. "Listen to the counsel of Marcus Aurelius:

"'*One thing here is worth a great deal, to pass thy life in truth and justice, with a benevolent disposition even to liars and unjust men.*'"

They got the book then and mauled it rather badly; but I, assuming the most bene-

volent air I could, continued peaceably my cocoa and cake.

For the rest, I might mention that we ate the pig in varying stages—that is to say, roast, boiled, salted, and finally in a stage when our noses did duty for our mouths, and dismissed him with remarkable promptitude.

Two days later The Pal went off to the neighbourhood of the wonderful new gold find, to peg some properties. We have not heard from him since, but from all accounts it is a genuine find this time, and means great future wealth and prosperity to Rhodesia.

The Writer-woman already sees her beloved country dictating to The Transvaal, and heading the nations of South Africa.

The question of gold-mining appears to be one which meets with her approval in the manner of its conducting more generally than agriculture. I don't know much about either myself, but I have it from her that the Government is generous towards the Small Holders. If satisfied that a certain small gold mine is genuine and worth working, the Government are willing to advance a considerable amount

of money for machinery at 6 per cent., which she says is a very moderate rate of interest for this country. Thus, if a man discovers an outcrop worth working, and can find enough capital to pay his way through the early stages, and to arrange for transport, the Government steps in to his aid, and he may do extremely well. On the other hand, I have heard grumbles that every single thing appertaining to mining is charged for, even the grass the donkeys eat, and the only free asset is the air they all breathe.

Once, during the first months I was out, we happened to be near a big gold mine, and when invited to inspect it I eagerly accepted the invitation. Not much was to be seen at first but white heaps of crushed ore from which the gold had been taken, and weird erections like gallows or the guillotine. There was certainly nothing anywhere in the least suggestive of gold ; neither could I see it unaided when handed a large piece of quartz and told it was full. Being ready, however, to see to the uttermost, I went down the mine to the 400-feet level. The descent was an

awesome experience. If I had seen the vehicle in which I was to descend sooner, I think I should probably have left the lower regions to my imagination.

I knew an engineer was coming with me, but when he showed me a minute iron coal-box arrangement, called a skip, and said we should go down the shaft in that, I thought he was joking. To this day I do not know how we both got into it. I never have known. We must have been about as closely packed as a chicken in an egg. Just as we were starting he told me to keep my head well down. Considering I was already tied up into a knot, with my head practically under my arm, I felt it was adding insult to injury. Then there was a whirring noise; the skip moved forward; I just managed to catch one last glimpse of blue sky and glittering sunlight, and we passed down into the gruesome darkness of the underworld. At the 400-feet level we stopped, because at the lowest one, 500 feet, there was so much water, I should have got wet through. In consequence we were unearthed from the skip at a little

landing, and got out with black depths stretching behind and before, above and below. Then the skip went back for Chip, but as he had it all to himself, he was only like quite a commonplace Jack-in-the-box. We then proceeded to find our way along gruesome drives and cross-cuts, carrying candles to light our path; but there wasn't much to see except burrowings in the earth, and staring, grinning, surly-looking niggers that made you feel as if you had strayed by chance into some suburban region of Hades.

I am of the opinion that gold mines are the most disappointing, not to say fraudulent, mines of all. A salt mine is really beautiful, and there is salt everywhere. A coal mine is what it professes to be, and what one naturally expects. But a gold mine isn't anything at all—a lot of grown-up children might just as well have been amusing themselves making a rabbit warren on an enormous scale. It would be much more satisfactory from some points of view to go to the Mint. I was not sorry to emerge again into the sunlight, and once more be unearthed from the little iron

coal-scuttle. As I clamoured to see something in the shape of gold before leaving, I was finally taken to the smelting-house, where, by a lucky chance, a large block of gold, worth very many thousands of pounds, was just cooling. This I was facetiously offered as a souvenir if I could carry it away—which, needless to add, was an impossibility, although it only looked a foot square.

On the whole I may be said to have returned to the Commissioner's, where we were staying, a sadder and a wiser woman—not having been able to "jump" even a grain of the best, as the Yankees would put it.

The Commissioner's office, I might mention, was something of a novelty. It consisted of a wattle-and-daub native hut, with a mud floor, and a beehive roof, beneath which it sheltered, among other things, an Empire typewriter, a Milner's safe, and an American roll-top writing-desk. The incongruity of its aspect did not prevent its being delightfully cool; and it might safely be recommended to City magnates—say, on the house-tops—desiring comfort in Lombard Street and elsewhere.

The natives who come before the Commissioner to pay taxes, or with complaints, or to be judged, sit on the ground outside in groups, awaiting his lordship's pleasure to attend to them.

Some of the Commissioners get extraordinarily fond of the natives, and can do anything with them, with understanding and stern justice; but others again, of feeble character, or who do not take the trouble to understand them, and think light of injustice, harm the country a good deal. This Commissioner told me that in the outlying districts they are still appallingly uncivilised, and the slaves of witchcraft and disease; but he seemed to think it had a beneficial side in keeping down their numbers, which must necessarily increase alarmingly under healthier conditions. Already they are about 900 to 1; and with steady development, unless the white man can keep the upper hand by sheer force of character, they must inevitably take back their country; and possibly, in doing so, murder every Englishman in it.

It is a problem for the future—a problem

that will be greatly simplified if, as far as possible, reliable men of fine character hold the posts nearest in touch with the natives *now*.

That, of course, I culled from the Writer-woman. Whenever I write bookishly, you may be sure it is something I have talked to her about.

Jill's Rhodesian Philosophy

THE DAM FARM,
March 4.

MY DEAR JACK,

It doesn't seem to be much use keeping any more diary, because it never does anything but rain nowadays. For about fourteen days it has rained without ceasing, more or less; and the atmosphere and earth are so damp that I feel as if I were stuffed with damp cotton wool. Once or twice I have tried to write; but almost immediately flatness descends upon me like a bread-poultice, and my pen will only discourse of mould and mildew and rust. I believe it is not often as bad as this; but that it was less damp last year is cold comfort to a brain which I feel convinced is already green with verdigris. Also I have been attacked by an intermittent, suppressed form of fever, which lays me down even flatter than the bread-poultice atmosphere; and the powers have decreed I must go south. In consequence I start for Durban in three days.

When I get there I shall write you a long letter, or send you a diary of the journey.

O Brotherkin! there is something I would fain whisper to you across the world; but if I whispered it here, could I give the tidings the radiating glow which should be theirs, and which alone could carry them, as they should be carried, through this pall-like ether?

Perhaps from Durban the whisper will carry quicker. I will send it out over the sea, through the breathing silence that spreads across the world at the hour of the Morning Glory. And you, little far-away Brotherkin, will rejoice with me, as when the stars of the morning sing together for joy.

JILL.

Jill's Rhodesian Philosophy

DURBAN,
March 26.

MY DEAR JACK,

I reached Durban two weeks ago, and enclose a short sketch of my impressions. As you will see I am going home. When you and Nesta arrive, I shall be there to greet you. But I cannot keep my secret till then—the secret I told you I should whisper across the world at the hour when the Morning Stars sing together for joy. Then lean down your ear, Little Brotherkin, and listen, while I whisper how, very soon, Jill will have to divide her place in your heart with another—and that other ?—a small English-Rhodesian who will be your god-child, and the Writer-woman's.

It is a little hard that Chip could not come with me, but many Rhodesian farm babies were claiming his special care, and he must needs stay and mind them. Though I wept at parting—in the middle of laughing at The

Pal's cheery send-off—I am philosophical yet, and tell myself, true to my own teaching: "How unfortunate should I be, had I no motherkin to go home to!"

Your one and only

JILL.

(*Enclosure*)

DURBAN,
March 12.

Durban is a modern Garden of Eden beside the sea. I do not know how to describe it. There is a certain passionate, lurid, riotous, luxuriant revelry about its colouring, which, I understand, is a grotesque contradiction to the sedate and staid parochialism of its inhabitants, and that defies description.

Where I sit, I look across terraces of richest, softest, emerald turf, studded with masses of brilliant flowering shrubs, to a turquoise sea that pales the very stones from which it is named.

The house behind me is hung with trailing blossoms, like a piece of a transformation scene, and an arbour above me playfully rains down petals of exquisite colouring into my

lap. Beautiful palms wave their fronds far up against the turquoise sky, and a stately tree, that in England would be just a solemn oak or elm, wears an unexpected air of levity where it has decked itself in masses of scarlet bloom. Scarlet, it would seem, is the prevailing colour —not gay nodding poppies, and climbing familiar geraniums, but tall trees and avenues and house sides waving, blazing scarlet against turquoise skies.

Yet I do not know if I like Durban. Almost I think I do not. Perhaps we British of the homely northern island, cannot by nature quite attune ourselves to an over-luxuriant richness of colour. Perhaps the moist, warm atmosphere, which is almost tropical, suits ill with the strong, stern blood of a northern race. I should distrust Durban, as, if I were a man, I should distrust a woman who was so beautiful that she cast a spell over my senses and drained my manhood.

We need the south to soften us with its fair-scented breezes and sunny skies, but it is to the north we belong—the north, with its stern demands and stern sorrows.

That is, a little perhaps, why one's heart bleeds so over the graves that line the long, sad route from Johannesburg to Durban—all those pitiful headstones that mark the useless waste of young, strong, British lives. What were they doing there at all? Why did they come out from their northern fastnesses, to be cut down and slain in this laughing southern land of scarlet and blue and gold? From Elandslaagte onwards it is all reminiscent of sad mistakes, of splendid heroism, of useless waste of life.

Some of the best-remembered names are places of great beauty. At Colenso the veldt rolls away to the horizon bathed in glorious sunlight, which mysteriously intensifies and softens and blends the nameless colouring of the African plains. At the horizon the veldt loses itself in range on range of mystical blue kopjes, betwixt which white clouds lie in the sunlight like snow. It might be the spirit-land in the far-away, a fitting background to a scene in which the foreground is eloquent with graves and tall memorials. From Ladysmith onwards each donga seems to hold its

silent testimony to the bitter struggle waged by the relieving force—each hill-top to proclaim how Britishers died hastening—hastening—to help the besieged.

It is a relief to leave them at last, and steam through the rich, beautiful scenery in the south. Natal is a lovely country, of rich foliage and rich pastures, and comfortable, solid-looking dwellings, standing in well-kept gardens on the farms. Very different to the Transvaal, which, seen from the railway, has a bare and desolate aspect.

Johannesburg I rather liked. I had to spend the greater part of a day there, and drove out to Parkside, the residential suburb, where you look across to far hills gleaming in the sunlight. Behind are the tall chimneys, and the tall white heaps of crushed ore, and the smoky pall, signifying the greed of gold and power ; beyond are the steadfast gleaming hills of the "Never Never Land," with their silent message concerning things that are better than gold, and better than power.

It is this that marks Johannesburg off from an ordinary mining centre. All the common-

place, ugly paraphernalia is there ; and men trample on men for gold ; and Wealth is a god to kneel down and worship in whatever guise he is clothed ; but when the air is clear and the sun bright the far hills beckon mysteriously ; and the Johannesburger who has a soul deeper than the spirit of his mercenary desires must surely feel the call in his blood to remember the better and deeper things. At such times, if he has them, he can perhaps dip into the books that speak of the far-off things, and leaving the tall chimneys and the smoky pall behind, fly away in spirit to those mystical solitudes which are beckoning to him. No man should be wholly material, even on the Rand, with dreaming silences ever on the horizon, when he looks for them.

And now I am going to say good-bye to Africa for a short space ; for the next homeward-bound Union-Castle mail steamer that steams gallantly out of Durban Harbour, and is lost to view behind The Bluff, will carry a certain young philosopher with her, back to the Homeland.

Why ? . . . Ah, that is my secret ; but perhaps

it has much to do with the exile's insatiable ache for home and home faces, when the hand of fate writes down on his or her page the things that are ever afterwards landmarks: the spirit that makes the Englishman glad he was born at home, wish to be married at home, and ask to be buried at home.

THE END

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